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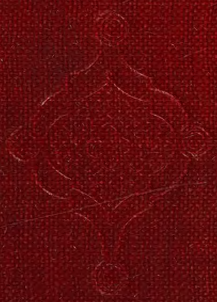

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OR

HOW DOES CHRIST'S HUMANITY AFFECT OUR OWN?

BY THE REV.

THEODORE WOOD

Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common

1863-1923

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PREFACE.

In this little book I have attempted to bring forward a great Fact with regard to our Blessed Lord's Humanity which, as I have reason to believe, is very often overlooked, although it is not possible, without it, to gain any clear and definite notion of the Divine Scheme for man's salvation.

For some of the thoughts in Chapter IV. I am indebted to a very valuable paper by the Rev. Josiah Simpson in the *Expositor*, Series iii., Vol. 5.

The book is not intended for theologians. If it throws a ray of light on some of the difficulties of those who are anxious to believe the Church's teaching, but are honestly puzzled in their endeavours to understand it, my object will have been achieved.

THEODORE WOOD.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Humanity of Jesus Christ.

"HE WAS MADE MAN."

In those majestic words, so simple and yet so profound, the Nicene Creed sums up the great mystery of the Incarnation—the mighty and marvellous truth that the Eternal Son of God, One with the Father, sent by the Father, condescended, in His Divine love and compassion for our fallen race, to unite Himself for ever with mankind by taking our flesh and our nature upon Him: so that now, and for all eternity, He is "not two, but one Christ—One, not by conversion of the Godhead into Flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God." In Jesus of Nazareth, Who was born, and lived, and taught, and suffered, and died, we see God manifesting Himself as Man. And the Gospels testify most clearly to the truth and reality of the human nature which He united with His Divinity.

He entered into human life by the ordinary avenue of human birth. He lay in His mother's arms in the helplessness of human infancy. Day by day He depended for His continuance in human

existence upon human food. He "increased in stature" by the ordinary processes of human growth. He passed through the successive stages of childhood, boyhood, and youth to adult manhood. Nothing marked Him out, in form or in constitution, as differing from those who grew up with Him in the little village in which He dwelt. From none of the conditions or needs of humanity was He exempt. He could suffer hunger; He could suffer thirst; He could suffer weakness, fatigue, exhaustion; He could suffer pain. When His sacred Body was wounded, It bled. When it was nailed to the Cross, It hung there helpless. And when the long torment had run its bitter course, It died. So far as the physical Nature of Jesus Christ was concerned, nothing was lacking to testify to the reality of His Incarnation. In Body He was truly human.

And as it was with Him in Body, so also was it in Mind. His Divine knowledge as the Eternal Son of the Most High did not override the conditions of His human development. He entered into earthly life in the dim half-consciousness of human infancy. Physical instincts were His; but the powers of thought, or reason—even, to a very great extent, of perception—were as yet only in germ. He knew nothing, He understood nothing. In due course, as with any other human infant, the faculty of observation dawned. He began to "take notice," and to respond, in infant fashion, to the loving

caresses of His mother. As time went on, He "increased," not only "in stature," but also "in wisdom."* He acquired knowledge, that is, by the ordinary methods of human education. He learned to think and reason for Himself.

Like any other Jewish boy, He was instructed in the Holy Scriptures. When He was twelve years old, He underwent the usual examination by the doctors of the Law, astounding those who questioned Him by His understanding and His answers. And throughout His earthly life He manifested the ordinary mental characteristics of man. He frequently asked for information. "How many loaves have ye?" "Where have ye laid him?" He could feel astonishment, surprise, disappointment, grief. And, side by side with Divine insight, Divine knowledge, and—with one remarkable exception—Divine foreknowledge,† we find in Him human ignorance. The disciples, for instance, seem to have brought to Him the first information of the murder of St. John the Baptist. Human thought, human reasoning, human learning—all these we see in the Incarnate Christ, Who was truly human in Mind, as well as in Body.

And as it was with Him in Body and in Mind, so it was also in Spirit. His Divine Nature as God did not oust, or overwhelm, His spiritual Nature as Man. He "increased" not only "in wisdom and in stature," but also "in favour with

* St. Luke ii. 52. † St. Mark xiii. 32.

God and man"—or rather, as the words are more correctly translated, "in grace before God and men."* And increase in grace is increase in holiness. It may seem, at first sight, to savour of irreverence, if not of something worse, to say that the Incarnate Son of God could be more holy at one period of His earthly life than at another, since His inherent holiness must always have been perfect and absolute, not admitting of degrees. But the meaning of the evangelist is clearly this, that the standard of holiness which is possible of attainment rises with increasing years, and that throughout His life the Saviour never failed to reach it. He was always, even as Man, ideally holy. But the standard of holiness which can be reached by the boy is higher than that which can be reached by the child; and that which can be reached by the youth is higher than that which can be reached by the boy; and that which can be reached by the man is higher again than that which can be reached by the youth. And it is our Saviour's human Nature alone of which St. Luke is speaking. In the first chapter of his Gospel, he reveals Him to us as God; but in the second he sets Him forth as Man. He speaks of His human Birth, and describes His human growth. He refers to Him in turn as the "Babe," the "Child," and the "Boy." He is careful to show that He was humanly dependent upon others, to whom He submitted as the

* St. Luke ii. 52.

younger to the elder, the child to the parent. So that when he tells us of the "increase" of the Child Jesus in grace, or holiness, he is obviously thinking, not of that perfect, absolute holiness which is inseparable from the very Nature of God, but of that reflected holiness which alone is possible to the nature of man. And in that holiness, which is the result in the soul of the working of the Holy Spirit, Christ, as Man, could "increase." There was never a moment when He was not perfectly holy. Alike as Child, and Boy, and Youth, and Man, He never committed the smallest act or gave way to the slightest thought of sin. And this sinlessness was not only, so to speak, external. Every impulse of Body, Mind, and Spirit moved in absolute harmony with the Divine Will. The three elements of that compound nature which He had added to His own were always in exact and perfect balance, and their activities and faculties were always brought into fullest action and concentrated upon their legitimate object. So that while He worked and thought for God with Body and Mind, His spiritual life was wholly lived in Him. But, passing as He did, through the entire range of human temptation, He yet had before Him, as He "increased in wisdom and in stature," an ever-advancing possibility of human holiness. Day by day His human nature widened out, and became capable of more than it could receive, or achieve, before. And day by day

He never failed to rise to the utmost heights which were open to Him. Yet all this He did in His humanity, not in His Divinity. For He was truly human in Spirit, as well as in Body and in Mind.

On this fact there is little need to dwell. In days of old, religious speculation centred largely in the discussion of questions relating to Christ's Human Nature. For four centuries after the question of His full and perfect Divinity had been finally settled, as far as the Church was concerned, by the decrees of the Council of Nicæa, attempts were made to explain away His full and perfect Humanity. In turn there rose up those who asserted that the Body in which He was seen on earth, and in which He died, was only a phantom ; or that Jesus of Nazareth was born, in the ordinary manner, as a man, and that the Eternal Son of God was afterwards for a time united with Him, coming upon Him at His baptism, and leaving Him before His Crucifixion ; or that His Humanity was merged and lost in His Divinity, like a drop of water in a barrel of wine ; or that He had no human Will ; or that He had no human Soul ; or that He had no human Spirit. Nowadays, however, at any rate in Western thought, these questions seldom or never arise. No one who believes in the existence of Jesus Christ as a historical personage doubts His true Humanity. The difficulty is rather to realize that His Humanity could of a

truth be brought into union with Deity; that Jesus of Nazareth was not only truly Man, but truly God as well. In other words, while, for many centuries, philosophical thinkers admitted the Divinity of Christ, but denied or minimized His Humanity, the tendency now is to grant His Humanity, but to deny or explain away His Divinity. The heresy of Arius, though condemned for ever, is by no means dead. And the central mystery of the Incarnation, it must be freely and willingly acknowledged, is incomprehensible by the human intellect. Our reasoning faculties will not enable us to understand, far less to express in precise and definite language, the manner in which this marvellous Union between the Divine and the human took place. All that we can do is to fall back on the assurance of the archangel at the Annunciation:—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."* In other words, it is only by the spiritual faculty of faith that we can accept the great foundation truth of Christianity, that the Son of God Himself was born of an earthly mother, and by that wondrous Incarnation took our nature upon Him, and added it for ever to His own.

And there we are content to leave it.

But a common difficulty for faith—one of the

* St. Luke i, 35.

greatest difficulties to many people who think for themselves on these matters—arises from a misapprehension as to what the Incarnation really involves. They know that Jesus of Nazareth lived as Man among men ; and therefore they take it for granted that the Church teaches that He was a human individual—an unit in the human race—although at the same time she worships Him as the Son of God. And, reasoning from this standpoint, they find themselves confronted by a twofold difficulty. In the first place, there is the difficulty of believing that God has associated Himself so completely with one single human being to the exclusion of all others—the difficulty which has found expression in the well-known formula of the "New Theology," "Jesus Christ was Divine, but so also are we." And, in the second place, there is the impossibility of understanding, in any way at all, how a satisfactory theory of an Atonement for human sin can be built up on such a foundation. For the sin which had to be atoned for is the sin of the entire race ; and they cannot see how an atonement of so vast a magnitude could possibly be made by one single human person, even though that human person was at the same time the Son of God. The Sacrifice of even Christ's death, on that assumption, does not seem to them to meet the needs of the case. "Could God be satisfied," they ask, "by such a manifest evasion ? Being all-just, could He be

persuaded to regard the Death of His sinless Son as clearing the sinful? If Christ died for our sins, as St. Paul declares, in what capacity did He do so? Did He die as the Son of God? If so, in what way does His Death remove the guilt of sin from man? Or did He die simply as a man? If so, how could the death of one man atone for the sin of all men?" They can only accept the doctrine of the Atonement, in short, with all its tremendous results, by regarding it either as a transaction, which involves most hopeless unreality, or else as a case of substitution, which involves manifest injustice. And, without any desire to question what has been Divinely revealed, they feel that in this matter the Church does not offer a sufficient interpretation of the facts.

So I want in this little book, as far as I may, to show what the teaching of the Church on this subject really is. I want to show, if I can, that although Mystery is and must be involved in any Divine act which is designed to bring about the remission of human sin, there is in the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, at any rate, no unreality and no injustice; that it is not a transaction, and that it is not a case of substitution. And I propose to do this by bringing out, and emphasizing, and following up in some of its many bearings, the true teaching of the Nicene Creed.

For that Creed does not say that when Jesus

Christ, "the only-begotten Son of God, came down from heaven and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," He was made a man. What it does say is, "HE WAS MADE MAN."

And the difference between those two statements is immeasurable—and vital.

I.

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

"By the Mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

"He was made Man."

Briefly stated, the doctrine expressed in these words is this, that the Eternal Son of God, when He condescended in His infinite love and compassion for our fallen race to become Incarnate, by His Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, became, not a mere human individual, like one of ourselves, but an epitome of all mankind. In other words, that He sums up, in His own Humanity, every man, woman, and child from Adam downwards to those who will still be living on earth when He returns in His glory on the Last Great Day. This conception of our Saviour's Human Nature is, perhaps, somewhat difficult to realise. But we can see three good reasons at least why the fact which it expresses is absolutely essential.

I. In the first place, without it, there is no true parallel between the two Natures of Christ.

On the side of His Divinity we are taught to regard Him as the Everlasting Son of the Everlasting Father, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God," summing up in His own Divine Person all that we understand and believe of Deity. "In Him," as St. Paul expresses it, "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* And if there was to be any true balance between this full and perfect Divinity and the Humanity which He took upon Himself at His Incarnation, it seems not only natural, so to speak, but necessary, that He should unite Himself, not merely with one particular human individuality, but with the entire human race as a whole; so that in Him should dwell, not only the fulness of Deity, but also all the fulness of manhood. He is, not a god, but God; and, in becoming Incarnate, He became, not a man, but Man. So that just as on the Divine side He represents, not only Himself as the Eternal Son, but also the Father and the Holy Spirit, from Whom He cannot be dissociated, so on the Human side He represents, not one solitary item in humanity, but every member of the whole human race. In Him the two "fulnesses" coalesce. In Him "God and Man"—each in totality—"is one Christ."

II. But there is a second necessity for the fact as well. The purpose of our Saviour's Incarnation was that, in His Human Nature, the

* Col. ii. 9.

penalty of sin might be paid. And this sin is race-wide. No man, woman, or child is free from it. Its foul infection and taint have passed even upon those who have not "sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression."* For it is not only that all of us to whom the power of choice has come have wilfully chosen the evil and neglected the good. It is also that by our very descent from those who have sinned before us we inherit a nature which is itself sinful and prone to evil. The whole race is infected with that foul spiritual poison which leads to spiritual death. And the penalty for all this race-wide sin could not be paid by one individual member of the race. Even in that sense it is true that "No man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him; for it cost more to redeem their souls."† And even though "the wages of sin is death,"‡ and even though Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, His Death could not have atoned for all the sins of all mankind if He had died simply as an individual human being. For in that case there would have been no sort of correspondence between the sin and its penalty. The entire race has sinned; and the entire race must suffer for its transgression.

III. And there is a third necessity for this great fact of Christ's Comprehensive Humanity. It was not enough that the Redeeming Death of the

* Rom. v 14. † Psalm xlix. 7. ‡ Rom. vi, 23.

race should be died. Before that death could become effective the Redeeming Life of the race must be lived. That which was to be offered to God as "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," must be a Life which was not only free from the taint of inherited sin, but one which had been lived throughout in absolute obedience to the Divine Will. Otherwise the death could not have been offered *for* sin. It would have been exacted as the penalty *of* sin. And this Life, like the Death, could not be merely that of one particular human being. Otherwise, again, there would be no correspondence between the sin and its penalty. The whole race had sinned, and the whole race must die for its sin. But before the whole race could die a death which would be, not merely the penalty of sin, but also the satisfaction for sin, the whole race must live a life in which even the searching Eye of God Himself could detect no fault or flaw. And that perfect life itself must be offered up, by the race, as an atonement for the race's sin.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ has often been explained by the theory of Substitution. It has been said that the Son of God bore the burden of our sins, and died the death which is the "wages of sin," instead of us; and that because He is the Very and Eternal Son of the Most High, His Sufferings and Death were accepted as a substitute for our own. But this theory is wholly untenable.

Our imperfect human justice cannot accept the punishment of the innocent, even if voluntarily endured, as a satisfaction for the wrong-doing of the guilty. If a man is fined in the police-court we do allow another man, it is true, to pay his fine. But the idea of that permission is, not that justice is satisfied by the mere payment, even though it is not made by the actual offender, but that the second man gives the requisite sum of money to the first man, so that it becomes his own; and that with it the offender meets the demands of justice. And, most certainly, if one man commits a murder, we cannot hang another man in his place, although he may be content to offer himself as a substitute for the actual murderer. Even if we did so, the murderer would be a murderer still. His sin would not be purged and done away because somebody else had died in his stead. And in the Atonement which had to be made for human sin, satisfaction had to be offered to the Divine justice, which is not imperfect like ours, but absolute. No compromise, no transaction, could satisfy That. There would have been no sort of reality, no redemptive efficacy, in a death died even by the Incarnate Son of God as a Substitute for us: while, even if such a death had been died, it would have left us still as guilty as ever. A purely vicarious expiation of sin would be no expiation at all. We should remain what we were, and where we were—sinners still, alienated from God, outcasts

from heaven, and incapable, by the very fact of our sin, of regaining what we had lost.

So no theory of the Atonement which regards Jesus Christ in His Sufferings and Death as a Substitute for man can possibly be accepted. Such a theory cannot be held without attributing to God the grossest injustice. Further than that, it overlooks the true nature of sin, regarding it merely as disobedience to arbitrary commands, and not in its true character of rebellion against God in His own Essential Being. The eternal laws of right and wrong are what they are because they are the expression of God's own Nature. Good is good, not because God commands it but because God *is* it. Evil is evil, not because God forbids it, but because God is *not* it. To commit sin, therefore, is not merely to disobey God. It is to accept and appropriate and make one's own that which God is not—that to which His whole Nature is foreign, and which He must ever regard with intensest hatred and loathing. And it necessarily follows that no vicarious penalty, however great, or by whomsoever paid, can possibly atone for it.

But, although we cannot admit the principle of substitution, there is another principle which in many ways we can and do admit. There is the principle of Representation—the idea that the many can be summed up in the one, who is so absolutely and entirely identified with those whom he represents, that his acts can be

accepted, his deeds can be regarded, as their own.

This principle underlies all human authority. We do not honour a King, for example, as a man: we honour him as the representative of a nation. He may have personal qualities which we greatly admire. He may endear himself to his people by a thousand acts of consideration and kindly thoughtfulness, or by a natural geniality of disposition, or by the wisdom and tact with which he governs, or by a happy combination of all these gifts and graces. But the honour which is paid to him in his royal capacity is simply due to the fact that he is the Representative Head of the nation. It is the expression of the nation's sense of its own dignity and self-respect in its corporate capacity. The nation honours itself in honouring him, because it regards itself as summed up in him. He represents all who belong to it.

So it is that in Shakespeare's historical plays we find sovereigns addressing one another, not by their own personal names, but by those of the countries over which they rule—"France;" "England." And so it is that the honour which is paid to a monarch is practically in proportion, not to his age, or to his seniority in point of accession, but to the size and importance of his kingdom. The man who represents fifty millions of men and women is a very different personage from the man who only represents a few hundred thousand.

Further still, we carry this principle of Representation into our system of justice. If a subject tribe in our foreign dominions rebels against our rule and takes up arms against us, we do not put the whole tribe to death when we succeed in quelling the rebellion. We do not even shoot all those who are taken with weapons in their hands. We have the right to do so, as the legal punishment for the high treason of which they have been guilty: but we only shoot the ringleaders. And by their execution justice is satisfied, since they are regarded as representing all their followers.

In things spiritual, too, the same great principle holds good. The Bishops represent the Church. They do not form the Church; neither does the Church consist of the Bishops taken together with the lower degrees of the Clergy. It is only through thoughtlessness, or ignorance, that people speak of Ordination as "going into the Church." For the Church, which is "the Body of Christ," consists of all those who have been "baptized into that One Body by the One Spirit." But nevertheless, in a very true sense indeed, the Bishops represent the Church; so that when they speak by their collective voice their decrees are binding. If a General Council, for instance, consisting of all the Bishops of Christendom, could be called together, in order to decide upon some disputed point of Church doctrine or discipline, their decision would be unassailable and

final. The Church would have spoken by them, as her lawful representatives; and their pronouncements would be those, not merely of some two or three thousand men of special ability and high position, but of the Church as a whole.

All through human society, in fact, alike in its national and spiritual aspects, this great principle of Representation is recognised. We cannot do without it. The whole theory and possibility of government are built up upon it. The most republican of nations, the most democratic of Churches, can only rule itself through its representatives. In one way or in another way we are constantly made to realize that we are not merely human individuals, a vast collection of independent units, but that we are integral parts of a great whole—" members," in short, of a " body," all in vital union with one another. And a body is necessarily summed up in its head.

And this great principle, without which, in Church or in State, nothing but chaos and anarchy would be possible, is but the reflection, on the human plane, of the great Thought of God, which He has set forth in all its fulness in the Incarnation of His Blessed Son. In the Human Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ we do not see that of an individual human being. Christ is not a mere unit in humanity. He is the Summary and Epitome of all humanity. In a far higher sense than that in which a King represents a nation, or the Bishops represent the Church,

He sums up and represents us all. In the Humanity which He took upon Himself through His Conception by the Holy Ghost and His Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we, each and all of us, have our part and share. We may see ourselves, as God sees us, represented in Him. Not by any legal or political figment, but in very deed and in truth, He is the Federal Head of our Race. "He was made," not "a man," but "Man."

Notice how forcibly and how fully this idea is brought out by Holy Scripture.

First of all, we have our Lord's own consistent repudiation of all terms of ordinary human relationship as applying to Himself. He seems to "step over these," as it has been well expressed, "as if they were barriers too narrow, too exclusive." We read that He was "in subjection,"* as a Child, to His Divinely-appointed guardians. But He not only rejects the title of "father" in connection with St. Joseph;† He never once even addresses the Blessed Virgin as "mother." At Cana it is "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"‡ On Calvary, as He commends His broken-hearted mother into the care of the beloved disciple, it is "Woman, behold thy son;"§ while to St. John, with a remarkable substitution of the pronouns, He says, "Behold *thy* mother."‖ When men come to

* St. Luke ii. 51. † St. Luke ii. 49. ‡ St. John ii. 4.
§ St. John xix. 26. ‖ St. John xix. 27.

Him, again, and tell Him that His mother and His brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Him, He asks "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?"* And then He goes on to say, rejecting the thought of the narrow circle of human relationships for that of the wider and comprehensive one, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My mother, and sister, and brother."†

We narrow down our own relationships to the affinities of flesh and blood. Jesus Christ extended His own to the affinities of the flesh and blood of the race, not to those of a particular line of ancestral descent. And He never calls Himself "David's son," or "Abraham's son." He never even speaks of Himself as an Israelite. Man, in His own thought, He is. But His human relationship is to the race, not to the members of one individual family, or tribe, or nation.

Next, we have His equally consistent use of the impersonal title "Son of Man," in speaking of Himself. It is true that pamphlets, and essays, and even books have been written on the meaning and significance of this title. It is also true—although the prophet never uses it of himself—that it is applied, no less than eighty-nine times, to Ezekiel, who was to be, in a special sense, the human instrument of the Lord of Glory, Whom he had seen in symbolical vision as "having the appearance of a man."‡ And there can be no

* St. Matt. xii. 48. † St. Matt. xii. 50. ‡ Ezek. i. 26.

doubt whatever that our Saviour, in appropriating this title, asserted His own claim to all that was foretold, under it, of the Messiah by the prophet Daniel, as One Who should possess "all dominion and glory," an "everlasting dominion which shall not pass away," and "a kingdom which shall not be destroyed."* "From this time," as it has been well and concisely expressed by a writer in the "Expositor" (5th Series, IV., 390), "the title 'Son of Man,' became to the Jews one of the favourite designations of the coming Messiah; and, like another ark of gold, it moved downwards through the centuries, carrying within it all their national hopes and longing, and their bright Hebrew dreams. When Jesus, then, took up this prophetic name, wrapping it about His Person in frequent iteration, shutting out effectually every other possible claimant as He called Himself "*the* Son of Man"—for there could be but one—it could be nothing less than His formal claim to the Messiahship."

But, while we grant all this, it is impossible for anyone who has learnt to regard Jesus Christ as the Representative Head of our race not to look upon this strange, impersonal title, which nearly eighty times He applies to Himself, as summing up His wonderful and unique relationship to every man, woman, and child in all the long line of humanity. To others He is "the carpenter's son;" "The Nazarene;" "the son

* Dan. vii. 14.

of Joseph;" "Elias;" "the risen Baptist;" "that prophet;" "a teacher sent from God;" "a prophet mighty in deed and word;" "the Son of David;" "the Son of God." But He Himself uses none of these titles. He never even speaks of Himself as "Christ;" for when He asks, "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?"* He is speaking of the Christ of prophecy and of vision, of Whom these things had been foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures—making claim to the office of Messiah, no doubt, but only obliquely to the title. Passing by all these designations of honour, He selects one whose only suggestion was that of humanity and humility, but without any thought of individuality. Just as in the Nicene Creed we say that "He was made," not "a man," but "Man," so He says of Himself that He is, not "the son of a man," but "the Son of Man."

Besides this, we have the wonderful Parable of the Vine, in which, by the use of a most striking symbol, the Saviour sets forth the relationship between Himself and His followers. "I am the Vine."† He does not say "I am the stem of the vine." If He had said that, the metaphor would have been a comparatively simple one. Then we could have explained it by saying, "Just as the branches draw all their life, and derive all their

* St. Luke xxiv. 26. † St. John xv. 1, 5.

power of fruition, from the stem, so it is with regard to ourselves and Jesus Christ. We draw all our spiritual life, all our power of bearing spiritual fruit, from Him." But He does not say, "I am the stem." He says, "I am the Vine"—the whole Vine, stem, branches, and all—and yet goes on immediately to say, "Ye are the branches." Could He have used any metaphor which would have expressed more vividly the great fact that in His Humanity we are all summed up, men, women, and children alike, together with the necessary corollary that we draw our life, and our power of bearing fruit, from Him?

Once more, we have that most wonderful saying in which our Blessed Lord sums up the mystical union between Himself and the Father on one side, and between Himself and us on the other. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."* He and the Father, though Two, are yet One, not merely in thought, in feeling, and in will, but in absolute Divine Essence. "I and My Father are one thing."† And even the very closeness, and comprehensiveness, and perfection of that Divine Union form an illustration of the reality and the fulness of that identification of Himself with us which comes as the result of His Incarnation.

And is it fanciful to think that a ray of bright light is thrown by this great doctrine upon that

* St. John xiv. 20. † St. John x. 30.

deep and mysterious saying of Jesus Christ—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me?"* May we not explain it by saying that the Saviour does not merely accept the gift, or the act of charity, which one man or woman offers to another, as if it had been offered to Himself, but that in deed and in truth it *has* been offered to Himself, just because every man, woman, and child amongst us all is summed up and represented in Him—the hungry man by the roadside, the wanderer without a home, the man in need of clothes, the sick man, and even the man suffering for his crimes in prison, all having part and share in His all-embracing Humanity?

St. Paul, too, speaks of our Blessed Lord as having had only one predecessor in the special character of His Humanity. "The second Man is of heaven."† It is a strange and startling phrase; and, if we reverse the order of the words, it becomes more startling still. "Of heaven is the second Man." In St. Paul's thought there have only been two "men"—Adam and Christ. He passes at a leap over all the millions who came between them, and speaks of these two alone as possessing a claim to the title of "Man" in its fulness. For both in Adam and in Christ, but in no others, humanity was summed up. It was summed up in Adam, because the entire

* St. Matt. xxv. 40. † Cor. xv. 47.

race of mankind was to descend from him. It was summed up in Christ, because the entire race of mankind was taken up into Him. And so again St. Paul speaks of our Blessed Lord as "the Last Adam"* lifting up and taking away, by His own Representative Death and Resurrection, that dread sentence which had fallen upon all the descendants of His predecessor in the Headship of Humanity. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."† At the same time he is careful to remind us, not merely that the Second Adam is greater than the first, but that there is an element in His Human Nature which was wanting in that of the first. "So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a quickening Spirit."‡ The one could propagate his race: the Other could purify and raise it. And he brings out the same great truth in the well-known passage of his Epistle to the Romans: "As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned: for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many

* 1 Cor. xv. 45. † 1 Cor. xv. 22. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life through the One, even Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's obedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous. And the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly; that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

It is impossible, again, to read St. Paul's Epistles with any degree of attention, without noticing how consistently he associates ourselves with all the principal acts in Christ's Redemptive Career. He always seems to regard them as performed, not so much by Christ for us, as by us in Christ. It was so with His Crucifixion. "I

* Rom. v. 12, etc.

have been crucified with Christ,"* he says, feeling that he himself, and each of us with him, hung and suffered in Christ upon the Cross. And again, "Our old man was crucified with Him."† It was so with His Death. "We died with Christ."‡ "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."§ "Faithful is the saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him."‖ It was so with His Resurrection. "Ye were raised together with Christ."¶ "God . . . quickened us together with Christ . . . and raised us up with Him."** "You did He quicken together with Him."†† It was so with His Ascension into heaven. "God . . . made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."‡‡ In St. Paul's thought, it is not a Divine Substitute Who has done all these things instead of us. It is the whole race of man that has done these things in Him as its Representative Head. And this is the leading idea of the whole Epistle to the Ephesians, the very keynote to which is the recurrent phrase "in Him." "God . . . hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."§§ "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."‖‖ He "freely bestowed the glory of His grace on us in the Beloved."¶¶

* Gal. ii. 20. † Rom. vi. 6. ‡ Rom. vi. 8.
§ Rom. vi. 11. ‖ 2 Tim. ii. 11. ¶ Col. iii. 1.
** Ephes. ii. 5. †† Col. ii. 13. ‡‡ Ephes. ii. 6.
§§ Ephes. i. 3. ‖‖ Ephes. i. 4. ¶¶ Ephes. i. 6.

"In Him we have Redemption through His Blood."* "In Him we were made a heritage."† "In Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the Blood of Christ."‡ "In Whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."§ "In Whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in Him."‖

And the same idea is brought out by the apostle's favourite metaphor of the Church as "the Body of Christ." It is true, of course, that the head is distinct from the body; and the leading idea in St. Paul's symbolical image is undoubtedly that of the absolute dependence of the members of the Church upon its Head—the thought that just as in the physical body of man the members derive their life, their power, and their capacity for feeling from the head, so we, as "members of Christ," derive our spiritual life and power from Him. But St. Paul does not limit his conception of the relationship of Christ to the Church by regarding it merely as that of a head to a body. He goes farther, and regards the Body as summed up in the Head. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, *so also is Christ.*"¶ It is the Parable of the Vine over again. Just as our Blessed Lord reveals Himself to us, in that Parable,

* Ephes. i. 7. † Ephes. i. 11. ‡ Ephes. ii. 13.
§ Ephes. ii. 22. ‖ Ephes. iii. 12. ¶ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

as the whole Vine, stem and branches together, so, in the Church, He is not only Head, but Head and Body as well. And the apostle goes even farther by suggesting, in a very deep and wonderful passage, that Christ, as the Head of Humanity, is not complete apart from the "members" who make up His "Body." God "gave Him," he says, "to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, *the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*"* It is easy enough to realize that we cannot be complete without Christ; but it is startling indeed to be told that Christ cannot be complete without us. Yet that is what St. Paul declares in this most remarkable passage. He identifies the Body so completely with the Head, that the Head cannot be regarded as perfect without it.

It is also true, of course, that the metaphor is limited; that the Church, which consists only of the baptized, is not co-extensive with the human race; and that Jesus Christ, by His Incarnation, became the Representative Head, not merely of those who have been brought into mystical union with Him through a sacramental rite, but of all mankind. But the Church, in its own lesser degree, is itself representative of all mankind. It shows us what Christ desires for all mankind. It is the "Catholic" or Universal Church, designed for all men, in all nations, throughout all ages. There are not many "Churches;" there is only

* Ephes. i. 22.

one Church. And that one Church, limited though it be, is now the anticipation, the earnest, and the pledge of what it is to be in the time to come, when the length and breadth and depth and height of God's great purpose for man are realized and achieved.

And so, in Christ's Headship of the Church we see the full expression of that Representation which embraces the entire human race, and which will be consummated and completed when at last all enemies have been put under His feet, and God is " all in all."

Meanwhile, each man, woman, and child from Adam downwards has part and share in that Comprehensive Humanity which the Eternal Son of God took upon Himself by His Conception by the Holy Ghost and His Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We are all summed up in Christ Jesus the Man, Who, because we are " in Him," could live, and suffer, and die, and rise again, and ascend into heaven, not merely instead of, but *as* mankind in union with Himself. And is it fanciful to suppose, with a great American preacher, that if a " composite photograph " could be obtained of the faces of all who have ever lived or who ever will live on earth, from Adam down to those who will be " changed ,in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," as they are caught up to " meet the Lord in the air "on the Last Great Day—their faces as they would have been if no line or lineament had ever been

marred by sin—the resultant picture would show us the Countenance of Jesus Christ ?

THREE results follow from this Comprehensive Humanity of our Blessed Lord—or, rather three most striking facts are interpreted and explained by it.

I. The first is that in Jesus of Nazareth we see One Who, although, as concerning the flesh, He came of the seed of Abraham, yet belongs to no one nation, but is acknowledged and owned by all. He was born a Jew ; yet there is nothing about Him that is distinctively Jewish. He is absolutely cosmopolitan. Beneath their common humanity, there is a very wide difference indeed between men of different nationalities. Not only in physical characteristics, but also in ways of thought, and even to a great extent in instincts and impulses, the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Chinaman, and the Hindoo are unlike one another. Yet one and all, when they are brought to the knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, they recognise and claim Him as their own. He is a Foreigner to none. One cannot imagine Russians being represented in any true sense by an Italian, or Hottentots by an Esquimaux or an Arab.

Yet Jesus Christ, in His Human Nature, can represent all these, and all other nations as well ; for in Him all national characteristics are obliterated. Even in His earthly Life we

see foreshadowings of this marvellous Comprehensiveness of His Person and His Ministry. A Roman emperor brings about the circumstances of His Birth; Eastern Magi visit Him in His cradle; Egypt harbours Him during His infancy; a Samaritan city gives Him His warmest welcome; Italian centurions implore His help and confess His Messiahship; Greeks beg earnestly for a glimpse of Him; a Cyrenian bears His cross when He falls beneath its weight. As Ruskin puts it, "Christ, as He was a Jew among Jews, and a Galilean among Galileans, was also, in His nearness to any—even the poorest—group of disciples, as one of their nation, their own 'Beau Christ d'Amiens,' as if He had been born of a Picard maiden." And though we smile at the narrowness of the Dutch or Italian painters, who depict the Infant Christ with the lineaments of a Dutch or an Italian child, yet, after all, they were not so very far wrong.

And this national comprehensiveness, if we may use such an expression, of Jesus Christ has never been seen in any other religious teacher. What affinity has Mahomet with Englishmen, or Buddha with Germans, or Confucius with Norwegians or Danes? Their appeal is strictly local, and limited. At the most, they are in touch and harmony only with Oriental methods of thought, and have nothing in common with the more practical Aryan temperament. Yet although, according to the poet,

"East is East, and West is West,
And never the two shall meet,"

East and West do meet in Jesus Christ, Whose teaching is more profound than that of any Hindoo philosopher, and yet so intensely practical as to shape and mould the daily life of the most energetic and virile of European nations. Eastern and Western alike see mirrored in Him, not only those characteristics of human nature which are prominent in themselves, but also those in which they are lacking. Their humanity is one-sided and incomplete; His is all-sided and perfect. By Him and by Him alone can it be truly said, "I am Man, and nothing that is human is alien to Me."

One of the chief reasons for the comparative failure of our missionary work among Eastern nations has lain in our inability to recognise this fact. We have presented a strictly Western Christ—even an English Christ—to Orientals, while they have instinctively felt that One filling the place which is attributed to Him must reflect their own national characteristics upon them, as well as ours. For in Christ's Human Nature "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all."* And we have forgotten too, perhaps, that the Church has something to receive from heathen nations, as well as something to give them:

* Col. iii. 11.

that Arabia, and China, and Japan, and India all have their contribution to make to "the fulness of Christ;" that His Mystical Body can never be complete until all the members of all the various races are living and working together in harmonious unity in the service of their Divine Head.

II. More than this. In Jesus of Nazareth we see One Who belongs, not only to no one nation, but also to no one age. How widely different, in thought and feeling, the great characters of the Old Testament are from those of the New! Yet all the patriarchs and prophets looked forward to Christ as the Pattern of Humanity. How vast a gulf there is between the men of the first and second centuries, and those of the twentieth! Yet we of to-day, with our developed intellect and our wider outlook, can see or imagine nothing that is lacking in that example of Human Nature which seemed so perfect to men and women eighteen hundred years ago. Even a single century separates us from our ancestors by a gap which is almost impassable. The literature of a hundred years back is stiff and pedantic to us now. The modes of thinking and the ways of speaking of our great-grandfathers are almost like those of foreigners. All along the ages there has been a constant advance. In many more ways than one, each generation leaves its predecessor behind it. Yet Jesus Christ, alone among human teachers, is never out of date. Modern

thought, like ancient thought, finds in His life and example, as well as in His formulated teaching its own highest aspirations and ideals. He is not the Christ of the first century alone; He is the Christ of all the centuries. He is the Representative Man, not only of all nations, but also of all ages.

III. And, once more, we see in Jesus of Nazareth, not merely the Man Who represents men, but also the Man Who represents women. In Christ's Character there are all the distinctive masculine virtues; but there are also the distinctive feminine graces. The strength and courage and firmness of the ideal man are united in Him with the insight, the sympathy, and the tenderness of the ideal woman. Man, who at the beginning is represented to us as unisexual in the first Adam, is shown to us as unisexual again in the Second. In Him there can not only be "neither Jew nor Greek, neither barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman:" there can also be "neither male nor female."* For "we are all one man in Christ Jesus."†

* Col. iii. 11. † Gal. iii. 28.

II.

The Virgin-Birth of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy Holy Nativity and Circumcision . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

FROM the earliest times the expression of a belief in the Miraculous Conception and the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ has found a place in the Christian Creed. "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. This is a subject which can only be approached with the greatest reserve and the deepest reverence, May that Divine Spirit Who came upon the lowly Maiden of Nazareth, that she might bring into the world as a human Child the Incarnate Son of God, help both writer and reader in thinking of this profound and wonderful Mystery.

Let us begin by briefly summarizing the Scriptural evidence upon the subject.

First of all, we have to go back to the earliest foreshadowing of the Gospel, the promise which accompanied and mellowed the curse which was pronounced upon man in the Garden of Eden. It is the "Seed" of the woman Who is to bruise the serpent's head.*

* Gen. iii. 15.

Now this expression is a very remarkable one; for elsewhere in Holy Scripture, when "seed" in this sense is spoken of, it is always the "seed" of the man. The promise to Abraham is that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* Great stress is laid upon the fact that Isaac is born of Sarah, not of Hagar, because his birth was "by promise": but it is invariably Abraham's "seed" that is spoken of, not Sarah's. The same promise is made again, in the same words, to Isaac;† and we also read of "the seed of Jacob,"‡ the "seed of Ephraim,"§ the "seed of Aaron,"‖ the "seed of Saul,"¶ and the "seed of David."** It is the father who transmits the gift of life to his descendants, not the mother. Yet in the one case of the first promise of the coming Redeemer there is no reference to fatherhood. The idea of motherhood alone is brought out.

We have, next, the great "Immanuel" prophecy, extending from Isaiah vii. 1 to ix. 7, with its centre in the words, "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you" (*i.e.* the unbelieving Ahaz) "a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."†† And this same son is referred to later on as One Who shall be Divine. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the govern-

* Gen. xxii. 18. † Gen. xxvi. 4. ‡ Gen. xxxii. 12.
§ Jer. vii. 15. ‖ Lev. xxi. 21. ¶ 1 Sam. xxiv. 21.
** St. John vii. 42. †† Is. vii. 14.

ment shall be upon His Shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." * This is the prophecy quoted by St. Matthew as fulfilled in Christ's birth (St. Matt. i. 22, 23), and seems to be referred to also in St. Luke i. 32, 33.

Two objections have been made to this interpretation.

The first is, that the word which in Isaiah's prediction is translated as "virgin" does not necessarily mean an unmarried woman, but could be used of any young woman of marriageable age, whether actually married or not. In the context, however, stress is unmistakably laid upon the unmarried state; and that the translators of the Septuagint (or Greek version of the Old Testament) so understood it is clearly shown by their use of the word *parthenos*, which does bear that significance, and no other. And though it appears to be true that the Jews themselves did not apply this prophecy to the Messiah, that fact at any rate disproves the idea that it was from this passage that the early disciples derived their notion of the Virgin-Birth which they attributed to Jesus of Nazareth.

The second objection is to the effect that, in the passage in question, Isaiah is not thinking of or looking forward to the Messiah at all—since a virgin-birth several centuries later would

* Is. ix. 6.

obviously have been no "sign" to Ahaz; and that all the prophet intended to signify was that before a child could be born of one who was then a virgin, and could be weaned (so as to be able to partake of "butter and honey"), the ill-starred confederacy between Rezin and Pekah should come to a disastrous termination.

Now it must be granted that neither Isaiah, nor any other author of Messianic prophecies, could have had any clear ideas as to the full significance of his own predictions. It must also be admitted that in many cases, if not in all, they were writing of some local personage or event then and there before them, with little if any notion as to the manner in which their words would find a fuller interpretation later on. For St. Peter plainly tells us, in his first Epistle, that the prophets not only failed to understand the meaning of their own prophecies, but realised that they did not understand them: that they were impelled to write what they wrote, without knowing why they wrote it. "Concerning which salvation," says the apostle, "the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what (time), or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that *not unto themselves*, but unto you, did they minister these things,

which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the Gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven."*

The real point is, not that in the minds of their authors the Messianic prophecies described the nature, person, office, work, and sufferings of the coming Messiah, but that afterwards, on looking back, it could be seen by ourselves that all these predictions are fulfilled in Jesus Christ—that from type and symbol, as well as from actual prediction, we, with our fuller light, are able to build up a kind of mosaic picture, in which no characteristic of Christ's Person and Nature, no detail of His Redemptive Work, is left unrepresented. Many of the Old Testament predictions avowedly had an immediate and local application. It may have been so with many others, possibly even with all. Yet those who uttered them dimly realised that their words were being used by a Power outside themselves as the vehicle of truths whose full meaning and force were as yet concealed from their view. And afterwards, when these predictions had received their last and more complete fulfilment, that golden thread could be traced through all the writings of all the prophets which showed that the Holy Spirit had used them as His instruments, and had been performing His great office of inspiration by consistently and continuously "testifying" to Christ.

* 1 Peter 10, etc.

And there is another point which should not be overlooked. Micah was Isaiah's contemporary. The two prophets seem to have been brought into very close relations with one another. It is impossible to compare Isaiah ii. 2-4 with Micah iv. 1-3, without seeing that. And in the remarkable Bethlehem prophecy of Micah—also quoted by St. Matthew as fulfilled in the circumstances of our Saviour's Nativity—we can scarcely help tracing an expansion of Isaiah's prediction.

We pass to the witness of the New Testament.

First of all, of course, there is the testimony of St. Matthew, which, as far as it goes, is perfectly definite and conclusive:—"When His mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His Name Jesus."*

St. Luke is even more definite still, since he gives an account, not only of the Nativity of our Blessed Lord, but also of the Annunciation

* St. Matt. i. 18, etc.

of His coming Birth to the Blessed Virgin Mary. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born of thee shall be called holy, the Son of God."*

By general consent, it is admitted that these two accounts are perfectly independent of one another. It is not merely that they are two distinct and separate accounts of the same thing, written by two different historians. It is that they are written from two perfectly different standpoints. The one tells us what preceded the Miraculous Conception of our Blessed Lord,

* St. Luke i. 26, etc.

while the other tells us what took place after it. And it is obvious that in the first of these two passages we have the account of the Nativity from St. Joseph's point of view, while in the second we have it from the standpoint of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From no others than these two could it have been forthcoming. And the chapters which contain it have always formed part of the two Gospels in question. They are present in every Version and in every Manuscript which is known to exist. And St. Luke gives, as his justification for writing, the fact that he has "traced the course of all things accurately from the first."

St. Mark and St. John, it has been objected, are silent upon the subject: and from their silence it is assumed that they were unaware of any miraculous element in our Saviour's Birth. But the argument from silence is at best a very precarious one; and in this case it is rendered null and void by the fact that neither St. Mark nor St. John refers to the Birth of our Blessed Lord at all. It would be just as reasonable to argue that neither of these two Evangelists knew that He had ever been born. Nor do they refer to His Childhood, or to His Youth. Their records begin with the commencement of His public Ministry, when He was thirty years old. But it would hardly be argued from this fact that they were unaware that He had ever been a Boy or a Young Man. They are silent upon

the Virgin Birth for just the same reason that they are silent with regard to the first thirty years of His life. It did not come within the scope of the task which they had set themselves to perform. They do not give an account of our Saviour's Life; they only give a narrative of His Ministry. And therefore they say nothing about the events which preceded it.

In this connection, however, there is one point which ought not to be overlooked. Our Lord Himself, on one occasion, raised the question of His own ancestry. "Jesus answered and said, as He taught in the Temple, How say the scribes that the Christ is the Son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet. David himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He his son?"* The Saviour does not claim in these words, it is true, to have entered the world through the medium of a Virgin-Birth. But He does declare most unmistakably, that His descent has not been in accordance with the ordinary course of human generation. And it is notable that the account of this significant conversation with the Pharisees is given by St. Mark, as well as by St. St. Matthew and St. Luke. Could he have recorded it if he had believed that Jesus Christ

* St Mark xii. 35.

had been born, like all the other sons of men, of two human parents?

The silence of St. Paul with regard to the Virgin-Birth, out of which a good deal of capital has been made, is again very easily accounted for. It did not fall within the scope of his "Gospel." His great object was to impress upon men's minds the cardinal fact that Jesus of Nazareth, Who had undoubtedly been put to death upon the Cross, had as undoubtedly risen again on the third day from the dead, according to His own promise, and according to the predictions with regard to Him which were to be found in the pages of the Old Testament. So his "Gospel" began with the Death of Jesus Christ, and ended with His Resurrection. "I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you . . . how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas;" etc., etc.* St. Paul limited the scope of his preaching, just as St. Mark and St. John limited the scope of their narratives; and the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth fell outside it. But it is impossible to suppose that he was ignorant of the fact. It is in St. Luke's Gospel that we have the fullest account of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, and of the events which preceded it.

* 1 Cor. xv. 1, etc.

Now St. Luke, for several years, was St. Paul's constant and intimate companion. St. Paul was the teacher, St. Luke was the disciple and fellow-missioner. Is it reasonable to suppose that St. Luke would have held, and asserted with so much circumstance and detail, a doctrine which his great instructor doubted or denied?

But further. Is there no real allusion to the doctrine in St. Paul's writings? We may pass by his reference to the consecration of motherhood by the Incarnation, perhaps, in his First Epistle to Timothy, as being at the best oblique, and somewhat obscure.* We may even pass by his remark that our Saviour was "born of a woman,"† as being capable of another interpretation—though even in that case it is strange that St. Paul should have used such an expression. But can it be seriously maintained that St. Paul could have regarded one who had come into the world by the ordinary processes of human conception and birth as a "second Adam," the progenitor of a New Humanity? No matter in what precise way we may prefer to interpret or explain the passage, it cannot be denied that the first Adam is represented, in the second chapter of Genesis, as entering the world by the direct creative action of God. Would there be any parallel at all to this, in the "second Adam," if he took his origin in the ordinary way from two human parents? "The first man Adam

* 1 Tim. ii. 15. † Gal. iv. 4.

became a living soul: the Last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."* It is inconceivable that St. Paul—so accurate and so precise in all his statements—should have written such words as these if he had believed that his "Last Adam" was born in all respects as an ordinary human being, while the "first Adam" was not. He does not set forth the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth, it is true, in plain and unmistakable language: but it is hard indeed to believe that he did not hold it. And it is not unimportant to remember that the whole passage in which he draws his parallel between the first Adam and the Second—and indeed the whole section of the Epistle in which it is enshrined—is concerned with the body of man and its final destiny. Spiritual men are to attain in the end to spirituality even of the body, *because* a new type of humanity—a second and purer and nobler manhood—is actually in existence, and can supersede and replace their own. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is of Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."†

And I cannot refrain from quoting a most suggestive and illuminating passage from an article upon this subject by the late Archbishop

* 1 Cor. xv. 45. † 1 Cor. xv. 47, etc.

Alexander :—"The story" (*i.e.* of the Virgin-Birth) "has behind it the witness of another chapter in another Revelation and Book of God. That book is science, and the title of the chapter is Heredity. And it is surely providential that just when the Scriptural doctrine is being impugned, the scientific doctrine should become so prominent. Prominent, but not new. For it is little more than a re-statement of our Lord's words, that what is born of flesh is flesh, what is born of Spirit is Spirit, and a really new life has a new kind of birth for its postulate and condition."

We have, on the other hand, one or two expressions in St. Luke's Gospel which ought not to be passed by without notice, although it will not be necessary to dwell upon them at any great length. They all occur in the very brief account which the evangelist gives of our Saviour's Childhood.

When it was revealed to the ancient Simeon that "he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ," and he "came in the Spirit into the Temple," we are told that "*the parents*" brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the Law;"* and, a little later, that "His *father* and His mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning Him."† We are also told that "His

* St. Luke ii. 27. † St. Luke ii. 33 (R.V.).

parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover,"* and that on the occasion of their doing so when He was twelve years old, "the Boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and His *parents* knew it not."† And—most significant, it might be urged, of all—when, after His three days' separation from them, St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary find Him "in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions," the Virgin-Mother says to Him, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I sought Thee, sorrowing."‡

It may be replied, however, that St. Luke in the first four of these passages, and the Blessed Virgin Mary herself in the last, merely use expressions which would naturally—and indeed inevitably—have been employed, not only during the Saviour's Childhood, but also for many years afterwards. By its very nature, the fact of the Virgin-Birth could not be publicly proclaimed. It was one of those things which the Blessed Virgin "kept and pondered in her heart." So far, in all probability, it was known only to St. Joseph besides, and—possibly—to Elisabeth. Even later on, it would have been the wildest folly for the apostles to proclaim it until men's minds had been prepared to receive it by the acceptance of His Resurrection and Ascension. And for either Christ's Mother or His foster-

* St. Luke ii. 41. † St. Luke ii. 43 (R.V.). ‡ St. Luke ii. 48.

father to do so during His Childhood was utterly out of the question. They could but make use of the terms which everybody else employed, though without any thought of expressing or emphasizing any fact with regard to the character of His Birth. Even we ourselves, in speaking colloquially of a child who had been adopted in earliest infancy, should probably refer to his "parents," while knowing perfectly well that they were only his guardians. And it is inconceivable that the Blessed Virgin, speaking of or to her Son while He was yet but a mere child, should refer to St. Joseph otherwise than as His "father." But it is notable that when she does so to her Son Himself in the Temple, His answer is couched in words which form an implied correction. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" * The Revised Version translates the saying, "in My Father's house." The literal interpretation of the Greek is, "in the things of My Father." But, whichever translation be adopted, the significance of the rejoinder is perfectly clear. Even at this early age—although, probably, He had not as yet come to the full realization of His Divine Sonship—the Holy Child could not pass over an expression which assumed that He had been born, in all respects, of human parents.

So much for the testimony of Holy Scripture

* St. Luke ii. 49.

with regard to the cardinal doctrine—for indeed it is nothing less—of our Saviour's Virgin-Birth. Now let us notice its necessity.

For it secured two essentials to Redemption.

I. In the first place, it secured the Personal sinlessness of the Redeemer in that Humanity which He took upon Himself by His Incarnation.

We can easily see that One Who was to offer "a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" must Himself be free, not only from actual sin, but also from all taint of transmitted sinfulness. For otherwise He Himself would have needed Redemption. The Saviour's Comprehensive Humanity enabled Him to offer a Sacrifice which should be co-extensive with the sin of the race. But if He Himself had been infected with sin, that Sacrifice could neither have been "full" nor "sufficient." Indeed, it could not even have been an "offering." For in that case death would have been exacted from Him as a penalty which must necessarily be paid. It could not have been voluntarily endured. "Death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* And if Jesus of Nazareth had been born in the ordinary way of two human parents, He must have inherited the fatal taint.

It has been urged, in reply, that even if the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth be accepted, the difficulty is not removed, but is only halved,

* Rom. v. 12.

since the Saviour admittedly derived His Human Nature from His Birth of a human mother, and that the taint of inherited sin must have been transmitted through her. And the Roman Church has evaded this argument, as we know, by formulating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. But sin is inherent, not in the material particles which make up the human body, but in the nature and will of the spiritual being of whom those particles form the temporary habitation. And, physiologically, the germ of life which developes into the spiritual being is handed down to the offspring, not by both parents, but by the father alone. The maternal function, from the very first, is purely nutritive. That, no doubt, is the reason why—with the one significant exception of the promise which accompanied the curse in Eden—the "seed" of man is invariably represented in Holy Scripture as that of the father. In this case, as in so many others, the Bible speaks scientifically. And it cannot escape our notice that both in the account of the Fall itself, and in St. Paul's comments upon it, the whole stress is laid on Adam's transgression, not on the transgression of Eve. Eve sinned before Adam did; but the catastrophe fell on the human race through the sin, not of Eve, but of Adam. It is "in Adam" that "all die."* It is "through one man," not through one woman,

* 1 Cor. xv. 22.

that "sin entered into the world."* For while Adam was a Representative Man, summing up in himself the whole race which was to spring from his "seed," Eve was not a Representative Woman. There could be no Representative Woman. And when a New Humanity took its origin, it was a Second Adam Who brought it, not a second Eve. The mother can nourish the life that is given; but the father must give it. The mother can impart her mental and moral qualities to her offspring; but she cannot impart the life-principle which comes from the father alone. And if that life, when given, were free from the taint of transmitted sin, it would not inherit that taint from the maternal functions, which are entirely external to it, and are concerned, not with its inherent essence, but with its embodiment and nutrition.

So there is no need for the Roman doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. That doctrine is not only non-Scriptural: it is uncalled-for. The Virgin-Mother of our Blessed Lord, though the purest and most perfect of all women, did not escape the universal taint. But she could not transmit it to the Humanity of her Divine Son, which was given to her only to nourish and to bring forth.

At the same time, it is most important to recollect that the Church does not teach, by its

* Rom. v. 12.

doctrine of the Virgin-Birth of our Saviour, that He derived His Human Nature in its entirety from His mother. On the contrary, it teaches—in accordance with Holy Scripture—that the initial act of parentage lay in the creative operation of the Holy Ghost. The Second Adam, like the first, owed His Human Life, directly and immediately, not to a human mother, but to "the Lord," "the Life-Giver." "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb," ran the promise of the Annunciation, "and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name Jesus."* And when the Blessed Virgin asked how this could be possible, since she "knew not a man," the answer came, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; *wherefore* that which is to be born of thee shall be called Holy, the Son of God."†

Here was a new creation of human nature. Here a new untainted, untaintable Humanity was given. For by a birth in which a human father took no part, and—so far as we are able to imagine—in no other way, the Entail of Sin could be cut, and the Second Adam, Who was to atone for the first Adam's transgression, could be "made like unto us in all things, sin only except."

It is more than a pity that from Rufinus down to writers of our own day, so many defenders of the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth of our Blessed

* St. Luke i. 31. † St. Luke i. 34, 35.

Lord have laid stress upon the supposed fact that "virgin-births" are not unknown in nature. For the whole point of our Saviour's miraculous Birth lies in the fact that it was *not* in accordance with the natural order, but was due to the direct intervention of God the Holy Ghost. That gift of life which He gave in the first place to the first Adam, when He "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul,"* He gave again now to the Second, Who, like His predecessor, derived His Humanity from no human ancestors—the difference lying in the fact that the Personality in which it dwelt in the case of the Second Adam was that, not of a simple human being, but of the Eternal Son of God. The Virgin-Birth was not contrary to nature, if we regard "nature" as the title which we give to God in one of His Self-manifestations. But it was not in accordance with the usual natural order. And it is in this very fact that we find its meaning and its value. The unique character of our Saviour's birth is the result of a Divine interposition in human affairs. It is the expression on the human plane of the great fact that God, in His Divine love for the fallen race of man, sent His own Son to become Incarnate in order that He might redeem it. And we empty it of all its significance, and deprive it of all its force, if we regard it simply as a thing which has its parallels in the world

* Gen. ii. 7.

of nature. Its whole value lies in the fact that it has not.

II. But there was a second Essential to Redemption. The Humanity which was to be offered as an Atonement for sin, as we have already noticed, could not be merely that of an individual human being. Like the sin itself, it had to be race-wide. All mankind had sinned; and all mankind must make reparation. And if this was to be done in the Person of a Representative Head of the race, it was necessary that there should be a miraculous element in His Birth. In other words, it was essential that Jesus of Nazareth should have no human father. For one who had been born in the usual way of two human parents could be no more than a human individual—an item in humanity, not humanity epitomized in a Head. And it would be impossible to attribute Deity to him unless upon the lines of one of the old heresies. To conceive of the actual Son of God as being born of an earthly father, as well as of an earthly mother, is practically out of the question. For in every ordinary human birth a new personality comes into existence; and in the Birth of Jesus Christ it did not. His is not a human personality. It is the personality of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, which was pre-existent "from the beginning." And, as a matter of fact, those who have doubted or denied our Saviour's Virgin-Birth have invariably failed to take an

adequate view of either His Person or His Work. It is impossible for them to do so. One who was born of two earthly parents could but be "a man"; he could not be "Man." Humanity would be His; but not Representative Humanity. He would—He could—represent no one but Himself. Neither could faith regard Him as the human embodiment of the Eternal Son of the Most High, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, of One Substance with the Father." And no one who fell short of combining all humanity in his manhood with all Deity in his Godhood could possibly be regarded as the Redeemer of all mankind.

Take away the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth, and the very idea of Redemption falls to the ground. This doctrine is not a metaphysical subtlety. It is not, as it has been called, "a mere theological necessity." It is absolutely vital. It cannot be rejected, or ignored, or explained away, without giving up the very essence of all Christian belief. Let no one think that "it does not matter whether we hold it or not." And the real marvel and miracle is, not that Jesus of Nazareth should have had no earthly father, but that God Himself should be Incarnate in His Person. Those who are able to look upon Him, and to worship Him, as the Very and Eternal Son of God, in Whose Human Nature the whole race of mankind is summed up and represented, find little difficulty in believing

that He was born on earth of a Virgin Mother. It would be impossible for them to believe that He was born otherwise.

It will be noticed that in the petition from the Litany which heads this chapter, our Saviour's Circumcision is linked with His Nativity. "By Thy holy Nativity *and Circumcision*, Good Lord, deliver us." And it may be wondered, perhaps, why this should be the case—why a rite which was purely human, and of merely symbolic importance, should be linked with that which is incomprehensible and Divine.

But we find the explanation again in the unique character of our Saviour's Manhood. Under the Old Dispensation, no soul could be brought into covenant with God except by the outward rite of circumcision. Even a Jew, so long as he remained uncircumcised, had no part or share in the promises which had been given to his race. And the New Humanity which clothed the Divine Person of Jesus Christ when He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary," though absolutely without stain or taint of sin, had still to be brought into covenant with God before it could be offered to Him as a Propitiation and Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

This was achieved by our Saviour's Circumcision. Mankind, as summed up in the Humanity of the Second Adam, was by that rite dedicated

to God, and qualified to become the recipient of the Divine promises. And the Race, in its Representative Head, having submitted to circumcision, the necessity for it passed away for ever. All that is needful now to bring us into covenant with God is Baptism, which makes us " members of Christ " by incorporating us with His mystical Body, " Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." * For " we, who are many, are one Body in Christ."†

* Gal. vi. 15. † Rom. xii. 5.

III.

The Temptations of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

UNDER the Divine Scheme of Redemption, the sin of the human race could only be expiated by the death of the human race as summed up in a Representative Head, that Head Himself being, not only a Summary of all mankind, but also truly and in all respects Divine. The Eternal Son of God, One with the Father, must be made, not "a man," but "Man"; and, as "Man," He must die. Before that atoning Death could take place, however, an indispensable preliminary had to be fulfilled. A true human life—again Representative in its character—had to be lived, from first to last, in absolute obedience to the Divine Will. In order that it might become capable of being offered as a full and sufficient propitiation and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, it had to be free, not only from the inherited taint of evil, but also from all actual transgression. No sin of omission or

commission in thought, word, or deed, must mar its perfect purity. For otherwise the sacrifice for sin would not be coextensive with the sin. A humanity which had been brought into the world sinless, but had passed through no probation, would have formed no counterpart to that earlier humanity which—again in the person of a representative head—had been equally stainless in its origin, but had fallen when confronted by the allurements of sin. And a humanity which was tainted with sin would itself have needed Redemption. If the Life of the race was to be offered by the Second Adam as a full satisfaction for the sin of the race in the first, it must obviously stand upon the same plane by being previously subjected to the same ordeal. The first Adam had been tested, and had failed: the second must be tested, and must succeed.

To put this truth in a somewhat different form, Jesus Christ could not have won Redemption for all mankind if He had been slaughtered with the Innocents at Bethlehem. Had He fallen by the swords of Herod's soldiers, He might indeed have died, in one sense, as a Representative of the race, since His Humanity derived its distinguishing character from His Conception by the Holy Ghost and His Birth of the Virgin Mary. But His Representation of mankind would have fallen short of the requirements of the case in a very important particular. The parallel between the first Adam and the Second

Adam would have failed: for while the first Adam had been called upon to meet temptation, and had given way before it, the Second Adam would not have been tempted at all. And an untempted Life, however representative in its character, and however stainless as regards its original purity, could not possibly form a true and perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for the transgressions of a race which had been confronted by temptation, and had failed to overcome it. In other words, before even Jesus Christ, as the Representative Man, could die a death of any redemptive value, He must live a Human Life in which even the searching Eye of God Himself could detect neither failure nor flaw. Original sinlessness, in the Second Adam, must be supplemented by actual freedom from sin throughout a real probation, if atonement was to be made for the transgressions of all mankind as summed up anew in a Representative Head.

We are too apt to dissociate Jesus Christ's earthly Life, in our thoughts, from His Death—to look upon His Death alone as the Atonement for sin, and His Life as merely a Great Example set forth in a beneficent Ministry. But the Life cannot be detached from the Death. The two form parts of one great whole; and the Death derives its atoning value from the Life. For the lives of all mankind were forfeit, because all mankind had sinned; and the Death which was

to atone for all its sin must be the Death of One Who, while summarizing and representing the entire race and enduring temptation with it, had yet no transgressions of His own for which atonement was needed. Then, and then alone, could there be a true parallel between the Fall of the First Adam and the Sacrifice of the Second. Then, and then alone, could the race be regarded as paying the penalty which the race had incurred. Before Jesus Christ could die a Redemptive Human Death, He must live a perfect Human Life. In all the forms of temptation which are common to man, He Himself must be tempted.

For a true human life cannot be lived without the conquest of temptation. In varying forms and degrees, temptation is the universal lot of man. With the exception of those who die in earliest infancy, not one of the sons and daughters of men escapes it. And it is important to notice that there are two very different points of view from which it can be regarded.

It can be regarded, from one point of view, as the enticement of evil, offered and urged upon the human soul, with all possible force and persistency, solely in the hope that it may be induced to fall. In that sense God does not tempt man. "Let no man say when he is tempted," says St. James, "I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man."*

* James i. 13.

But temptation can also be regarded from another point of view. It can also be regarded as a spiritual discipline and education, resulting, if successfully encountered, in the development and fixation of character, the will, by resolute and continued resistance to evil, becoming firmly and finally set in the direction of good and of God. In this sense God does tempt man, or, at any rate, allow man to be tempted, using the temptation for His own purpose, and bringing good out of evil. And this is the sense in which we are to understand the statement of the sacred writer, that "God did tempt Abraham."* By the fierce conflict which took place in his soul between his love for his own son and his love for God, when the two seemed to be in opposition to one another, his character was finally fixed in harmony with the Divine Will. And in this sense God did not only allow, but provide, for the temptation of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Then was Jesus led up *of the Spirit* into the wilderness," we read, "to be tempted of the devil."†

There is all the difference in the world between the soldier who is thoroughly skilled and drilled in all the routine of the barracks and the parade-ground, but has never yet seen a shot fired in anger, and the soldier who has borne himself bravely and done his duty in a dozen engagements, while the bullets were screaming past

* Gen. xxii. 1. † St. Matt. iv. 1.

him and his comrades were dropping on every side. The one is a soldier only in name; the other is a soldier in fact. The one may lose his nerve and fly when he is faced by the ordeal of actual battle; the other will not. Nothing makes a man a true soldier but war. And, just in the same way, there is all the difference in the world between the man who is pure only because he has never felt the force of temptation, and the man who is pure because he has encountered temptation and has overcome it. A little child, in its purity and innocence, is a beautiful sight. But far more beautiful is the sight of the grey-haired saint. The one has never yet known temptation; the other has passed successfully through it. And while the character of the one is as yet unformed, because it is as yet untested, the character of the other is permanently fixed, through its testing, in the direction of good.

Both these elements in temptation are experienced in every human life. We all meet with temptations which are direct incentives to evil, offered by those dark spiritual beings who have taken evil for their good, and urged by them upon us solely in the hope that we shall fall. And there are also temptations through which it is God's Will that we shall pass—temptations which result from the very surroundings amid which He places us—temptations which we may almost say are set in our path by Him, not with

the desire that we shall give way to them, but simply because it is only by resisting them and overcoming them that our characters can be so developed, so strengthened, and so fixed, that they may be brought wholly and for ever into absolute harmony with His Will. Simply because of His Fatherhood, God craves, not for the obedience of live marionettes, pulled helplessly here and there by the strings of destiny, but for the free, unconstrained service of those who could withhold it if they pleased. So He allows temptation, not in the sense of inducement to evil, but in that of testing character, as that of Abraham was tested. And all have to pass through the furnace. But while, in its fierce flames, some are utterly consumed, others are but purged from the dross that defiles and mars them, and come forth from that searching ordeal as gold tried by the fire.

Now both these elements were present in that Tempted Life which was lived by our Lord Jesus Christ. There came to Him temptations which were urged and pressed upon Him solely in the hope that He might fall. Satan in person assailed Him in the wilderness, at the close of the forty days' fast, and again in the Garden of Gethsemane. Temptation came to Him, again, through the earnest remonstrance of a friend,* through the well-meant hint of a Roman judge,† and through the jeering taunt of the scribes and

* St. Matt. xvi. 22. † St. John xix. 10.

the chief priests.* In all these cases—at any rate in the mind of him to whom it was primarily due—the temptation was offered solely with the hope and desire that the Christ might fall.

Besides these, there were temptations which came to Him through the ordinary conditions and surroundings of His daily life. It is quite a mistake to think that the Saviour was tempted only during the forty days which He spent in solitude in the wilderness. Just because He was so really and so truly human, He was tempted constantly, and at times even fiercely, throughout the three and thirty years which He spent upon earth. He met, successively, the temptations of childhood, boyhood, youth, and adult manhood. Bodily temptations, intellectual temptations, spiritual temptations, alike were known to Him.

His physical needs had to be satisfied: and He experienced the temptation to indulge them: for "bodily pains and pleasures," as it has been well said, "found in Him the most exquisitely sensitive nerves to which they had ever appealed." Intellectual powers were His in far more than the fullest degree in which they have ever been granted to men; and He must have felt the desire, in many ways, to use them wrongly. And even in that mysterious realm which we know as the "animal soul," the seat of those stormy passions which have such fearful power to wreck

* St. Matt. xxvii. 43.

and ruin our human nature, He had the conflict to wage which is common to us all. It was so throughout His early Life. From the time when Infancy passed into Childhood, and His Human Will first began to exercise its independent action, He met and overcame, each day, the day's temptations. In Him "we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are."

And just as He entered into our human experience by enduring temptation in all its varying forms, so also He shared it in the fact that it came to Him with two distinct objects in view. It came to Him, in the onslaughts of Satan and his emissaries, in the hope that He might be induced to fall. And it came to Him through the Divine permission, in order that His Human Character might be fixed and set, by His own continuous choice of good, in harmony with the Divine Will. "Though He was a Son," He yet "learned obedience by the things which He suffered"; * *i.e.* by the temptations which He met and overcame. The primal innocence which He possessed through His Conception by the Holy Ghost and His Birth of a Virgin Mother developed into the higher, and permanent, and more acceptable purity which came through His own resolute and unvarying obedience in all things to the Will of God. God was "well

* Heb. v. 8.

pleased " in His Beloved Son, not merely because He came into the world stainless, but because He remained in the world sinless. In Him the primal intention of God with regard to man found its fulfilment. The New Humanity which He brought into the world was tested and tried in every possible respect, and in none was it found wanting. Its perfection lay, not only in its own inherent sinlessness, but in that personal victory over temptation which was so absolute and so complete. The first Adam lost his first estate ; the Second Adam kept it and made it His own, not only by inheritance, but also by right of conquest. And so, when His Probation was ended, He could offer up His Life, not as the satisfaction of a debt which He was compelled to pay, but as a free, willing, and all-sufficient sacrifice for all the sins of all the whole race which in His Comprehensive Humanity He summed-up and represented.

In this connection three difficulties naturally occur to us.

I. We wonder, first of all, how our Lord Jesus Christ, being what He is, could in reality be tempted in any way whatever. In purest reverence we shrink from attributing to Him the capacity for feeling temptation. It seems to derogate from His absolute sinlessness, His perfect holiness, to suggest that He could actually have experienced its malignant force and sting.

But the reason why we feel this is that, all unconsciously, we are judging Him by ourselves. To us, the sense of being really tempted—of feeling the strong desire to think, say, or do what we know to be wrong—seems to be necessarily connected with sin itself. Temptation, merely as temptation, seems to bring defilement with it. We hate and loathe ourselves for having actually felt its force, even although we have not given way to its allurements. But that is because, when temptation has come to us previously, we have yielded to it. Our thoughts are coloured by the recollection of the fact that, when we passed through a similar ordeal before, we fell. The past sin is perpetuated, as it were, in the present temptation. Yet in merely feeling temptation, no matter how strongly we feel it, there is no sin. We cannot help being tempted ; and temptation, if its force were not actually felt, would be no temptation at all. It is the ordeal through which all must pass, so that by ourselves the great choice may be made, and we may offer to God, not the mechanical obedience of puppets, but the free, loving service of sons and daughters for which the Heart of the Great All-Father yearns. And so it was with our Blessed Lord as Man. Feeling temptation's fullest force, experiencing to the uttermost the attractiveness which evil could exert, there was yet in Him no inward response to it. His whole Will was set against it, and in His Nature it could find no home.

II. But there is a second difficulty. If Christ's Human Nature was united with His own Divine Personality as the Son of God, then He could not yield to temptation. And if there was no possibility of His yielding, He could not really be tempted.

The answer is that, although He was in very truth Divine, and therefore incapable of sinning, yet, in virtue of the reality and completeness of the Humanity which He took upon Himself by becoming Incarnate, He could experience to the uttermost the power which can be exerted by temptation upon human nature. He could not have given way to it; but He could feel the difficulty of overcoming it. He could not do wrong; but he could feel the hardness and the painfulness of doing right. It must never be forgotten that the conflict with temptation took place in His Human Nature alone. It was as Man that He felt its force; it was solely as Man that He overcame it. Jesus Christ did not resist and conquer temptation by the power which He possessed as God. He resisted and conquered it by the grace of the Holy Spirit which was given to Him as Man, and which is given to us for that self-same purpose. "The Child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."* So we are told at the very outset of the Saviour's earthly Life. And when the first thirty years

* St. Luke ii. 40.

of that Life were over—the Life of the home circle, in the humble village—and the Public Ministry was about to begin, that grace was given to Him again, in fuller measure. "The Holy Ghost descended, in a bodily form as a Dove, upon Him."* And He met and overcame temptation throughout, not by His own inherent Divine power, but by that of human effort, reinforced by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot read the Gospels carefully, for instance, without noticing that our Blessed Lord consistently refused to exercise His Divine power in order to save Himself either from the force of temptation, or from the consequences of resistance to it. He would feed others by multiplying loaves and fishes; but He would not satisfy His own hunger by turning stones into bread. He would heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, give sight to the blind, make the lame to walk; but He would not cast Himself from a pinnacle of the Temple, and float down to the ground unhurt, in order to convince the assembled multitudes of His Messiahship by an undeniable sign, and spare Himself the bitter pain of rejection by those whom He had come to redeem. He would beg that His followers might be allowed to go their way when He Himself was arrested; but He would not pay the small act of homage to Satan which would ensure His own escape from persecution and bitter suffering. The special

* St. Luke iii. 22.

intention of the three great temptations at the close of the Forty Days' Fast, indeed, appears to have been to induce Him to use His own inherent power as the Son of God to save Himself from suffering as the Son of Man, and so to destroy the reality of that purely Human Life which was the indispensable condition of Redemption. So, too, we find that He would not accept the ministrations of the "more than twelve legions of angels" which He could command in His own Divine right, though He did not reject the aid of the one angel who "came to Him, strengthening Him," in the weakness of His Manhood. Neither would He consent to 'come down from the Cross." At any moment, by the exercise of His Divine Will, He could have brought the long anguish to a close. But there was truth in the taunts of the scribes and the chief priests. He saved others, but Himself He could not save. His conflict with evil, throughout, had to be waged by Him in His Human Nature alone. And only that Divine assistance could be accepted, or used, which is granted in like measure, for the like purpose, to ourselves.

III. But there is a third difficulty as well, which to many has seemed insuperable. "How can it possibly be true," it is urged, "that Jesus Christ was 'in all points tempted like as we are'? For in His temptations—at any rate according to the Church's teaching—two elements were wanting which are only too sadly prominent

in our own. In the first place, by escaping the transmitted taint of sin, He escaped also the hereditary bias towards evil which 'all we the rest' inherit through our parentage, and which handicaps us so heavily in our struggle with temptation. This at once destroys the supposed parallel between His case and our own, and His earthly Life of sinlessness is no true Example for us. And, in the second place, He knew nothing of that even graver weakness which comes as the consequence of previous sins. We ourselves find, only too often, that the greatest difficulty in resisting temptation arises from the fact that we have already given way to it. Our powers of resistance are weakened by our own past failures. We have fallen already, and therefore are more liable to fall again. But with Him this was not so. He 'knew no sin,' and therefore fell very far short of realizing by His own personal experience, the power which evil exerts over ourselves. Temptation to Him cannot have been what temptation is to us; and therefore His Example in overcoming it loses its force. We do not occupy the position in which He stood, and can find neither comfort nor help in the fact that He passed successfully through an ordeal for which He was so much better equipped than we are."

This difficulty, however, is met and answered by the words with which the inspired writer concludes his account of our Saviour's victory

over temptation. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, *yet without sin.*"* This concluding clause does not mean that Jesus Christ resisted temptation so successfully and so completely that no taint of evil came upon Him as He struggled with it—though this, of course, would be true. What it does mean is that the temptations which assailed Him were in all respects identical with our own, except in the one fact that the element which is introduced into temptation by sin was in His case wholly excluded. The writer recognises and asserts the fact that Christ was without any inherited predisposition towards evil, and was also free from the weakness which is due to past transgressions. But—and this is the important point—the essential feature in Christ's probation as Man was, not that He should feel the force of temptation as we ourselves have to feel it now, *but that He, as the Second Adam, should feel it as it was felt by the first Adam before he fell;* so that the Second Adam might succeed where the first Adam had failed. And the first Adam felt it, until his fatal act of acquiescence, not as we feel it, but minus the two elements of inherited bias, and of the weakening of the power of resistance which results from previous transgressions.

We are apt to lay too much stress, sometimes on our Saviour's earthly Life as an Example to ourselves. That Life of absolute, unswerving

* Heb. iv. 15

obedience to the Divine Will is an Example no doubt, and the greatest and grandest that has ever been set. But it is an Example only within certain restricted limits. There are points in which we cannot follow Christ; there are other points in which we may not even attempt to do so. And it should never be for a moment forgotten that the main purpose of His conquest over all human temptation was, not to show us how we ourselves may overcome it, but to enable Himself to carry out the indispensable preliminary to Redemption—that of living, as the Representative Head of the Race, a Human Life which even in the sight of God Himself should be absolutely without a flaw. To this the setting of an Example which His followers might imitate was altogether subsidiary. So also was the acquisition of sympathy with them by personal experience of their conflict. These things were great things no doubt; but they were not the main thing. First of all, in importance, came the development and the final establishment of the Saviour's Human Character in perfect harmony with the Divine Will, in order that He might be able to offer up a Life co-extensive with the life of the race, but wholly free from all taint or trace of evil, as a sufficient and satisfactory propitiation for the race's sin.

So there was no need for Him, in meeting temptation, to feel those two elements of weakness which we feel now so intensely. He had not to

feel as fallen man feels : He had only to feel what unfallen man had to feel in the person of the first Adam. And He did so by enduring temptation as it had appealed to His predecessor in the headship of humanity before he involved the race with himself in destruction by giving way to it. Being Himself " without sin," the Saviour had to meet temptation deprived of those elements which sin adds to it, just as Adam had had to meet it before Him. And, by overcoming it in His Human strength, aided only by the grace which could be given to Him as Man by the Holy Spirit, He was enabled to offer to His Heavenly Father the Sacrifice of a Life which had fulfilled all the Divine requirements, and which, being representative of the life of all mankind, covered the whole ground which had been lost by Adam's sin. " For, as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous—that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

In the solemn petition in the Litany which refers to the part played by our Saviour's Temptation in the scheme of Redemption, that Temptation does not stand alone. It is coupled with His Baptism and His Fasting. " By Thy

* Rom. v. 19, etc.

Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, Good Lord, deliver us." And the sequence of the words seem to show that the reference is to the Forty Days' Temptation in the Wilderness.

The reason evidently is that, in the ordinary daily life of man, the gift of special spiritual grace, and the putting forth of special spiritual effort, are invariably followed by the coming of special temptation. This may be regarded as a law of the spiritual life; and it will seem in no wise strange to those who recognize the existence of evil spirits with desire and power to tempt. For, if special grace is given to a struggling soul, such beings will do their best, as a matter of course, to take it away. If special effort is made, they will naturally try their hardest to deprive it of its results.

We find it so in the case of a Confirmation. It is the almost universal experience of the newly-confirmed—or at any rate of those who are much in earnest, and have been deeply imbued with a sense of the reality and the greatness of the Gift which they have received—that temptation in stronger forms, and very often in new forms, almost immediately comes to them. They are made to feel that "following Christ" does indeed involve "taking up the Cross." It is not merely that inward impulses to sin become more insistent, or more frequent. It is that in many ways life is made harder for them than it was before, in exact proportion to the earnestness and

persistence with which they try to follow up their newly-made resolutions. The ordeal begins, very often, with the jeering crowds which wait outside the doors to greet them as they leave the church. It follows them into the shop, into the factory, into the office; even into the home. "Persecution arises because of the Word." Every church worker in a country parish, or in a poor town parish, knows how desperately difficult it is made for lads and young women to live a religious life; how for months, or even for years, they have to run the daily gauntlet of gibe and jeer, of mockery and vile abuse, of intimidation, and even of actual violence. The world still hates a really religious man or woman, who is a standing reproach against it; and "he that is born after the flesh" still persecutes "him that is born after the Spirit." There are those who deny that special grace is given in Confirmation. Satan, however—who in this matter is an excellent judge—appears to hold a different opinion. And certainly no effort on his part is ever lacking to deprive that holy Rite of its effects.

And we find it so also with regard to the Holy Communion. It is the experience of countless earnest communicants that temptation comes to them very soon indeed after they return from the altar. Evil thoughts—wholly unwelcome—come crowding in. Evil impulses move and stir. Almost on leaving the church door, certainly on rejoining the family circle, there comes the

incitement to the special besetting sin. They are made to feel that their footsteps are dogged—that the grace is no sooner given than unseen hands are stretched eagerly out to snatch it away. There are those who do not believe that grace is conveyed through the Sacraments; but Satan, again, seems to hold a different opinion. And certainly, in one way or in another way, he does his best to deprive them of their effects in those who faithfully and earnestly receive them.

And our Blessed Lord Himself, in that wondrous Human Nature of His which sums up and represents us all, was no stranger to this universal experience of His followers. In this respect also He was "in all points tempted like as we are."* For His Baptism was immediately followed by fierce and prolonged temptation. That Baptism itself, of course, conveyed no grace. As administered by the Baptist it had no sacramental efficacy, since the sacramental character had not as yet been imparted to it. It was but a mere symbol, teaching that just as men's bodies needed cleansing from material defilement, so their souls required to be purified from the worse defilement of sin. It was "an outward and visible sign," accompanied by no inward and spiritual grace. It was "baptism with water," not "Baptism with the Holy Ghost."

But although, in our Saviour's case, this baptism brought neither purification nor spiritual

* Heb. iv. 15.

strength, it was followed at once by the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Who came upon Him in visible form as a Dove, equipping Him with all that was needful for the momentous Ministry on which He was now about to enter, and consecrating Him for His three-fold Work as our Prophet, Priest, and King. And forthwith the special temptation followed. "*Then*," says St. Matthew, "was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."* This little word "then" is not a mere copula connecting the passage with that which has gone before it. It is not a mere note of time, showing the sequence in which certain events took place. It points out the close and intimate connection between the Gift of the Holy Ghost and the special temptation which followed it. And St. Mark draws out the lesson more plainly by saying "*Straightway* the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness; and He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan,"† while St. Luke emphasizes it even more forcibly still by declaring that "Jesus, *full of the Holy Spirit*, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil."‡ Those three expressions, "then," "straightway," "full of the Holy Spirit," all state the same truth with varying degrees of force. They all bear witness to the fact that our Blessed Lord, in His Comprehensive Humanity,

* St. Matt, iv. 1. † St. Mark i. 12, 13. ‡ St. Luke iv. 1, 2.

experienced in fullest measure the operation of that law which ordains that the gift of special spiritual grace shall be followed by special and often prolonged temptation. It is so in our own experience; and it was so in His.

So it was also with regard to His Forty Days' Fast. "Fasting" involves distinct and continued spiritual effort; and we ourselves almost always find that it is accompanied, or immediately followed, by temptation in unusual degree. It is hard to be patient or courteous when the body is crying out for the satisfaction of its desires. Appetite, when it is repressed in one way, makes itself felt in others. The "buffeting" of the body and bringing it into "bondage" involves, not only remonstrances on the part of the body, but temptation in other forms as well. And the special spiritual effort involved in a 'Retreat," or in the keeping of Lent, is never unaccompanied by some determined attempt on Satan's part to regain the ground which he is losing.

And so it was again in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. The very fact that He fasted during His forty days' sojourn in the wilderness threw Him open to special temptation. It was not only that His physical powers were weakened by His abstinence from food; it was also that His very intensity of spiritual effort invited the attack of those dark beings who watched the Master as they watch His followers, and opened up a fresh avenue through

which their onslaught might be made. In His Humanity again He shared our human experience. No element was lacking in the force and variety with which temptation could appeal to Him as true though unfallen Man. No side of His Comprehensive Human Nature was left unattacked. "In *all* points" He was "tempted like as we are," save only as regards those extraneous elements which are introduced into temptation by inherited and by personal sin.

From this "He was clearly void, both in His Flesh and in His Spirit." In every other respect He overcame it. All its waves and storms passed over Him, and left Him pure and untainted as before. And so the indispensable preliminary to Redemption was secured. By the living of the perfect, Representative Human Life Jesus Christ was enabled to die the Death which atones for the sin of all mankind.

IV.

The Agony of Jesus Christ.

"By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

We saw in the preceding chapter that our Blessed Lord, as the Representative of all humanity, endured the full force of all human temptation as it could appeal to unfallen man, the extraneous element which is introduced into it by the inheritance of a tainted nature, or by the weakness resulting from past transgressions, finding no place in the probation of the Second Adam, as it had found none in that of the first. And we saw that His conquest of temptation in His Human Nature alone, aided only by that grace of the Holy Spirit which is given for a like purpose to ourselves, enabled Him to offer up His Life as a perfect and sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

It must not be forgotten, however, that between the first Adam and the Second there was a very important difference. The first Adam came only as the representative head of the race: but the

Second Adam came, not only as its Representative Head, but also as its Redeemer. The first Adam had merely to win a battle: the Second Adam had to undo the effects of a previous defeat as well. And this fact, for Him, immensely widened the scope of temptation. It opened out avenues for Satanic suggestion which to the first Adam were absolutely unknown. And so, still in His Human Nature, and still in His Representative Character, there came to our Blessed Lord certain special temptations which have no counterpart in our own experience, simply because we are individual human beings, while He was, not "a man," but "Man."

I. The first of these we find in the personal onslaught of Satan himself, at the close of the Forty Days' Fast. We lose all the force and meaning of the three temptations which were offered to Him then if we regard them as in any way analogous to those which we ourselves have to meet—as exemplifying, for instance, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. To no one less than the Incarnate Son of God, Who had come down from heaven and taken our flesh and our nature upon Himself in order that He might live and die for the sins of the world, could such temptations as these have been offered. We can draw personal lessons from them, no doubt; but we cannot look upon them as parallel with any which we ourselves can be called upon to endure. They

came to our Blessed Lord in His Messianic capacity, and were all three aimed at that perfect union of the human with the Divine which alone rendered Redemption possible. For if the Saviour had used His Divine power to satisfy His human needs by turning stones into bread, or by offering a sign which would have won for Himself instant acceptance, or by purchasing exemption from toil and suffering at the price of one small concession to Satan's usurped authority, then the Life which He was living would have ceased to be truly human, and so would have failed to meet the Divine requirements. In other words, these three temptations seem all to have been designed and offered solely with the view of rendering Redemption impossible.

And here we find the explanation of that taunting word "If," with which the first two of the three temptations (taking them in St. Matthew's order) were introduced. It is, of course, quite possible that the use of the word implied a doubt in Satan's own mind with regard to the Saviour's Person and claims. We cannot, perhaps, do more than speculate upon such a subject. But it would seem natural to suppose that the Counsel of the Divine Love and Wisdom had not been imparted to the arch-enemy of mankind; that he could not know the whole deep truth which underlay the promise of the Coming of the Messiah; and that he had to gather up for himself the knowledge of the Saviour's true

Personality from His Life and Teaching when He came. And, so far, no miracles had been wrought by our Blessed Lord, and no teaching had been given. There was only His spotless life: only His steadfast and successful resistance to every form of temptation. And though these things marked Him out as one raised high in holiness above all other men that had walked the earth, it may have been that they were not sufficient to convince the tempter that he had indeed to deal with the Incarnate Son of God.

But, however this may be, there can be very little doubt that the Saviour Himself, in His Human Nature, had only just come to the full realization of His Divine Personality and His Mission as man's Redeemer. We cannot believe that it was known to Him in His infancy. To do so would be utterly destructive of the idea that He lived a truly human life; for an infant has no knowledge of its own personality. It cannot have been fully known to Him in His Childhood, His Boyhood, or His Youth. We ourselves never realize our place in the Divine Scheme, or our responsibility with regard to the work to which God has called us, till youth has given place to adult manhood. And we may reverently believe that the full conviction of His Divine Sonship, and of His Mission as the Redeemer of mankind, came to the Saviour only when, at the moment of His Baptism, He heard the Father's Voice saying from heaven, " This is My beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Then followed forty days, not of the mere temptations of ordinary, every-day life, such as might have come in the carpenter's shop, or in the home, or even in the daily exercise of the Ministry, but of those which came as the Saviour meditated, in solitude and in silence, on the task to which He had been called, and the suffering through which alone it could be carried out. One by one the successive steps of the journey which He must take would become apparent to Him: one by one the sorrows, the disappointments, and the dangers which He must undergo, the pains which He must bear, the Death which He must die, would be unrolled before His Eyes. And then, when His Bodily powers were weakened by extreme hunger, and His Mind was filled with the horror of the Rejection, the Scourging, the Passion, and the Cross, there came the temptation to exercise the Divine Power, which He now fully realized that He possessed, in such a way as to spare Himself the bitter ordeal which lay before Him, and was even now beginning. "*If* Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."† "*If* Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down."‡ It was the temptation, not merely of the Representative Head of the race, but of Him Who had come to be the race's Redeemer. It was the peculiar, personal temptation of the Second Adam. It was the temptation to make use of His Divine

* St. Matt. iii. 17. † St. Matt. iv. 3. ‡ St. Matt. iv. 6.

power in order to escape the sufferings which He was called upon to endure in His Humanity—to destroy the perfect balance of the two perfect Natures which qualified Him for His office as the Redeemer of mankind. And the absence of the introductory "If" in the third temptation gives it even greater force. "Thou art the Son of God. Then exercise Thy power, and spare Thyself this suffering. Make one small concession, as the Divine Son, to my authority. All these things will I give Thee, without the necessity of suffering and dying, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Two years later the temptation came again. The education of the apostles was almost completed: and the Saviour began to speak more plainly than ever before of His own Personality and Office. "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?"* They answered that opinions differed: that some regarded Him as John the Baptist, risen from the dead; some as Elijah; others as Jeremiah, or as one of the other great prophets, reincarnated. Then came the crucial question, "But Who say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."† This great confession elicited from the Saviour an outburst of thankfulness and rejoicing. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath

* St. Matt. xvi. 13. † St. Matt. xvi. 15, 16.

not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven."* Then came the great promise with regard to the future Church. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."† And this was followed again by a plain prediction of the cost at which these things should be won. "From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."‡ And then, in an instant, and from—humanly speaking—a totally unexpected quarter, the Great Temptation came once more. "Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee."§

Once more it was the temptation of Satan himself, though spoken by the lips of a friend; and the Saviour showed His recognition of the quarter whence it came by His swift and sharp rejoinder—the same rejoinder which had dismissed the tempter once before in the wilderness. And once more it was the temptation which could appeal to the Second Adam alone—the temptation to use His Divinity in sparing His Humanity, and so to destroy the perfect balance between the two Natures which alone made Redemption possible.

A third temptation of similar character, and

* St. Matt. xvi. 17. † St. Matt. xvi. 18.
‡ St. Matt. xvi. 21. § St. Matt. xvi. 22.

perhaps of even greater force, followed twelve months later. "Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart; and He was transfigured before them."*

This strange and mysterious episode in our Saviour's earthly Life has many lessons to teach us, no doubt; but its chief and innermost meaning appears to be this. The probation of the Second Adam was now over. He had passed triumphantly through the appointed ordeal. He had met and successfully resisted temptation in every form in which it could appeal to unfallen man. Not even the all-seeing Eye of the Divine Father could detect the slightest fault or flaw in that Life of perfect, unswerving obedience to the Divine Will. And nothing further could be required from Him. Death could not be exacted from Him, since in Him was no sin. If He so willed, the New Humanity, as summed up in Him, could pass at once to its eternal glorification. The gates were open. The dazzling radiance of Deity was even now enveloping His Sacred Person in a cloud of blinding light. One step, and He could resume His vacant Throne, and take His Humanity with Him. Only if He did so, the Old Humanity which He had come to redeem must perish. If that was ever to be restored, the Perfect Life which He had lived must be offered as an atonement for the sins

* St. Matt. xvii. 1.

of the fallen race. Of His own free-will the Saviour must turn His back on the reward which He could justly have claimed. A distinct act of renunciation was required: and He made it. But at what cost He did so, it is impossible for us to understand. We cannot even faintly imagine the force of that tremendous temptation to make use of His Divinity in sparing His Humanity by stepping aside from the path which would take Him down to the mountain-side to Calvary and to Death. Once more the Representative Head of the race, in His capacity as Redeemer, was confronted by a temptation which only the Second Adam could have felt. And once more He overcame it.

But the fiercest temptation of all, it would seem, took place in Gethsemane. And here, once more, we stand on most holy ground. In all the Gospel history there is no scene so awe-inspiring as that which took place in the darkness of the Garden. Upon the Cross all who passed by might freely gaze: but on the Agony not even the apostles may look, except from afar. First the Eight and then the Three are left behind, and the Master passes on alone. Even the beloved disciple himself may not bear Him company there. Only with reverence the very deepest may we think of Him as He lies prostrate on the ground, bathed in that fearful Sweat which pours from Him in great drops as of Blood.

Only in awe the most profound may we listen to the broken words of prayer which fall three times over from His Lips. "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."*

What was that bitter "cup"? Was it the realization of the pain the Saviour had to suffer of the Death He had to die, on the morrow? Was the thought of the Cross, now that its shadow was upon Him, so terrible that it was almost more than He could bear? Was He shrinking from the Bodily Suffering that all through His Three Years' Ministry at least He had known that He must endure?

Scarcely that, surely. Other men, and women too, have gone even to the cross without one sign of dread. And, later on, the Terror seems to have passed. At His arrest, and in the high priest's judgment hall, Christ is absolutely calm and self-possessed. As He stands before Pilate, and hears His sentence spoken, He shows no sign of dread. As He treads the Way of Sorrows He does not falter. His charge then, to those who pity Him, is "Weep not for Me." As the grim tragedy of Crucifixion begins, He does not shrink. Even as the nails tear their cruel way through Hands and Feet, even as the Cross is roughly jerked and jolted into place, He shows

* St. Matt. xxvi. 39.

no sign of suffering. During the greater part of the six long hours of torment He does not even speak. The scene in Gethsemane has no counterpart on Calvary. No anguished prayer goes up there that the cup may be taken away. There must have been some dread ordeal, some fearful trial in the Garden itself, to crush the Saviour three times to the ground, to wring from Him, thrice repeated, that exceeding bitter cry. And as we note His words, we cannot but feel that it is some present Horror from which He prays to be delivered, some instant, immediate, fearful trial which fills His whole Soul with unutterable dread. "Let *this* cup pass from Me," He says. And in the Greek the word "this" is emphatic. The Saviour is not shrinking from the thought of the morrow's sufferings. He is shrinking from the "cup" which is now being held, and pressed, to His Lips.

To understand what this mysterious "cup" was, we have to remember four points:—

I. First, we have to remember that when, after the Temptation in the Wilderness, Satan was forced to acknowledge defeat, and to leave the Saviour victorious, he did not wholly give up the battle. It was only to be expected that he should make at least one further effort to prevent his dominion from being wrested out of his hands. So he went, but only with the intention of returning later on. "When the devil had completed every temptation," St. Luke tells us, in language

most deeply suggestive, "he departed from Him *for a season.*"*

II. Next we have to bear in mind the fact that the Saviour's path, during the whole of His Ministry, seems to have been dogged by the powers of evil. To us, very often, Satan and his angels are but imaginary beings, picturesque personages in romantic melodrama, or the fantastic creations of a poet's dream. But to the Saviour Himself they were most real; we cannot read His words without perceiving that. And we have many indications that throughout His Ministry they were always close at hand. There are those mysterious cases of demoniac possession, of which we hear nothing before He comes, but with which He is constantly meeting—cases, many of them, which no one else than He can overcome, and which cannot be accounted for by any theory of epilepsy or of mental disease. There are the words which He Himself from time to time lets fall. When He sends out His disciples, He gives them "authority over unclean spirits."† When they return, and triumphantly tell Him that even the devils have been subject unto them in His Name, He declares "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven,"‡ and goes on to say that He has given them "authority over all the power of the enemy." When St. Peter, in all good will, makes a suggestion strangely suggestive of the third temptation

* St. Luke iv. 13. † St. Matt. x. 1. ‡ St. Luke x. 18, 19.

in the wilderness, the Saviour sees the tempter lurking, as it were, behind the apostle, and replies as He had replied two years before, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."* Later on, as His Ministry draws to its close, these references become more and more frequent, and more and more definite. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not."† "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."‡ And then, most significant of all, just before leaving the Upper Room to set out for Gethsemane, "The prince of the world cometh; and he hath nothing in Me."§ The impression left upon us by these sayings is that the Saviour was conscious throughout of the relentless opposition of a personal foe, unseen, but never far distant; that He felt that every step He took was closely watched; and that He was fully aware that one last desperate attack would be made upon Him before the work of Redemption could be brought to a close. And we note a mysterious significance in the words which He addresses, as He leaves the Garden, to the hostile crowd who have come out to witness His arrest—"This is your hour, *and the power of darkness.*"‖

III. Thirdly, we have to remember the true

* St. Matt. xvi. 23. † St. Luke xxii. 31. ‡ St. John xii. 31.
§ St. John xiv. 30. ‖ St. Luke xxii. 53.

meaning of the word by which St. Luke describes the Scene in Gethsemane. "Being in an Agony, He prayed more earnestly."* That dread word "agony" to us, implies the last extremity of human suffering—pain intensified to the very uttermost degree that flesh and blood can bear. But, as the evangelist uses it, the word has no connection with pain at all. It is one of the old terms of the Amphitheatre. It signifies a wrestling-match, and was applied to those fierce personal conflicts in which two picked champions, locked in one another's embrace, struggled for the mastery in the arena, their breasts heaving, their muscles bursting almost through the skin as they strove and strained together, each knowing but too well that for himself defeat meant death. That was the "agony." We have a relic of this idea still in our term "antagonist"—one who agonizes, or strives with another. And when St. Luke employs the word to describe that spiritual conflict which took place in the darkness of the Garden, he means, surely, not that the Saviour, in the weakness of His Manhood, was broken and beaten down to the very ground by the dread of His coming sufferings—not that now, when Calvary was fully realized, He would draw back from it if only He could, and that He begged with all the fervency that was in Him to be spared that fearful ordeal—but that He was engaged, then and there, in a struggle of

* St. Luke xxii. 44.

unimaginable intensity, wrestling in fiercest spiritual conflict with a powerful, merciless, personal foe; and that foe was the prince of evil himself. Satan had returned. Just as there had been a fierce temptation for the Saviour to pass through at the outset of His Three Years' Ministry, so there was another, even fiercer still, to be endured at its close. Now, as then, the temptation was threefold; and Satan, terrified at the thought of losing his dominion, flung himself, as it were, with all the force of his malignant, diabolical wickedness upon the Saviour, using all his fiendish art and ingenuity and power to force Him to give way, pressing and urging the fiercest temptation upon Him, hoping, we can scarcely doubt, that by the very stress and strain of the struggle His sacred Life might be crushed out in the Garden, so that He might be prevented from laying it down upon the Cross. For that seems to be the meaning of those strange words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the writer tells us that our Blessed Lord "in the days of His Flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death," was "heard for His godly fear."* He *was* saved from death—not from death on the Cross, for He willed to die that, but from death in the Garden, the death which would not have won Redemption for men. And here we have the

* Heb. v. 7

clue to those other strange words in the same Epistle, "Ye have not yet *resisted unto blood*, striving"—or, as the Greek word has it—"*antagonizing against* sin."* By no other word than that which pictured the death-struggle in the arena could the sacred writer describe the dread conflict which took place in Gethsemane, while the apostles slumbered and slept, as the Representative Man and man's great Enemy met and strove with one another once more.

IV. And, lastly, we have to note that when the Saviour, craving in His Human weakness for human sympathy, came to His wearied followers and found them sleeping, He reproached them with the significant words, "Watch and pray, that *ye* enter not into temptation;"† with the inference, "Even as I am being tempted now."

So we see what the bitter "cup" was that the Saviour dreaded so intensely. We cannot even dimly realize what it must have been for Him, in His absolute purity, with all His Divine hatred of evil, to have evil urged upon Him, pressed upon Him, with all the full power of the prince of evil himself; to have to feel the power of the worst and most terrible temptation; to be in the very death-grip of the prince of darkness himself. We cannot imagine it. We can only understand that as the task of bearing our sins

* Heb. xii, 4. † St. Matt. xxvi. 41.

was one that only God Incarnate could undertake, so the suffering which it brought Him, before the Cross as well as on the Cross, was such as only God Incarnate could endure.

The first Adam fell before the force of temptation. The Second Adam met it, in fuller force and more abundant measure, and overcame.

"O wisest Love! that flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe—
Should strive and should prevail.

"O generous Love! that He, Who smote
In Man, for man, the foe,
The double agony in Man
For man should undergo.

"And in the garden secretly,
And on the Cross on high,
Should teach His brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die."

V.

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy Cross and Passion . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

One of the greatest obstacles to a right faith in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has been an undue insistence upon the physical aspect of His Crucifixion. We read books, we listen to sermons, in which that aspect alone is brought out, and is dwelt upon with an almost ghastly realism. The terrible sufferings which crucifixion brings are pictured with a minuteness which overlooks no detail, and a vividness which shocks and horrifies. We are invited to contemplate the Saviour's Cross only that we may imagine the full measure of the Bodily torment which for six long hours He endured. Yet we cannot read the Gospels without noticing that all this is in marked contrast with the sober restraint of the evangelists, who dismiss that side of the Passion, with one accord, in three simple words. "They crucified Him." That is all they say. They make no attempt to describe the physical pangs of crucifixion, or to enlist our pity for the

Sinless Sufferer as the long torture wears slowly to its close. Over the terrible pain which accompanied and followed the nailing to the Cross they draw a reverent veil. "They crucified Him." The inspired writers could not say less than that: and they will not say more. For they realize that there was something behind the Cross which was far more terrible than the Cross itself—that the Bodily anguish which it brought was overshadowed by a far greater agony of Soul.

And, again with one accord, the greatest masters both in sculpture and in painting have brought out the same idea. In all the noblest representations of the Tragedy of Calvary we see the two thieves portrayed in fiercest torment, their limbs drawn up, their bodies twisted and writhing, their faces distorted with almost unbearable pain. But between the two the Saviour hangs calm and still, with no suggestion of suffering in the expression of His Features, or in the pose of His sacred Body. It is a true instinct. For, while we are undoubtedly intended to regard the Cross as the scene of unimaginable anguish, the physical pain which it brought, intense though it must have been beyond all our powers of realization, was altogether secondary. The worst and fiercest suffering of the Passion was spiritual.

It is true that the sacred writers lay stress upon the fact that it was by this particular

form of death that the Saviour died. We cannot go so far as to say that it was essential to Redemption. Our Blessed Lord might, conceivably, have redeemed us if He had died by stoning, or by the sword, or by some merciful narcotic poison. But we are given to understand that He deliberately willed to die by crucifixion in accordance with a Divine decree. He became "obedient unto death," says the apostle, "yea, the death of the Cross."* And no doubt one reason why our Blessed Lord accepted that form of death was that it is by far the most painful death that man can possibly die. It sums up in itself all known forms of human agony. It intensifies them to the very last degree that flesh and blood can bear, stopping short only of that point at which unconsciousness would come to the relief of the sufferer. Yet He would not even drink the stupefying draught which was provided for crucified criminals by the charity of Roman ladies, but drained the cup of pain to its bitterest dregs. For it was fitting in the Eyes of the Divine Justice that He Who came to pay the penalty, as the Representative Head of the Race, of all the race's sin, should die the death which summarized all the pain that sin had brought into the world. For, directly, or indirectly, immediately or remotely, all pain is a consequence of sin.

A second reason, we may suppose, why our

* Phil. ii. 8

Blessed Lord willed to die upon the Cross was that crucifixion was regarded as the most shameful form in which death could be inflicted. Among the Romans, it was a death reserved for the lowest slaves. It was a death to which such ignominy was attached, that Cicero declares that in all the Latin language there is no word strong enough to describe the wickedness of inflicting it upon even the humblest citizen of Rome. And among the Jews it was deemed an even more shameful punishment still. Owing partly, perhaps, to superstitions which had gathered round the denunciation in the Mosaic Law, "He that is hanged is accursed of God,"* it was regarded as bringing with it the Divine malediction. Hoisted up between earth and heaven, the crucified was looked upon as rejected by both. His utter shame was symbolized by the taking away of his raiment. And it was fitting again, in the Sight of Divine Justice, that He Who came to die for man's sin as man's Representative should choose the death which summarized all human shame. For shame, like pain, is a consequence of sin. The first Adam never knew it till he realized his own transgression.

But yet the worst and fiercest suffering which the Saviour had to bear was spiritual. Behind the Bodily torment which He endured in such intense degree there lay a sharper and more

* Deut. xxi. 23

poignant anguish still, which to our finite human minds must for ever remain incomprehensible—an anguish which came to Him, as His greatest temptations came, in His Messianic capacity.

It was foreshadowed by the symbolic ritual of the sending away of the scapegoat. In that deeply significant rite three profound truths found expression—the first, that men's sins could not be borne and expiated by men themselves ; the second, that after atonement had been made for them by the offering at the Mercy-seat of the blood of an innocent victim, they could be laid upon one who should represent the sinners ; and the third, that that representative could not only bear the sins, but could take them away out of the Presence of God, into a place where they would be no more seen for ever. "Aaron shall kill the goat of the sin-offering, that is for the people," ran the Divine command, "and bring his blood within the veil. . . . and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat ; and he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins. . . . And when he hath made an end of atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat : and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins ; and he shall

put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man that is in readiness into the wilderness: . and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a solitary land."*

Could a more wonderful picture possibly have been drawn of the great Atonement which this solemn rite prefigured, culminating in the bearing of the burden of human sin by a sinless and representative sufferer, and the taking of that sin away?

But it was not only prefigured in type. It was also foretold in prophecy in that wonderful passage in which Isaiah describes the coming Passion of the Redeemer, so closely and so minutely that we almost seem to be reading the account of an actual eye-witness, and with the reiterated suggestion of Representation. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. . . . All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . For the transgression of my people was He smitten. . . . He bare the sins of many."†

Here we have, again, the idea of a Representative Sufferer, and of the deep truth that the worst

* Lev. xvi. 15, etc. † Isaiah liii. 4, etc.

anguish which He is called upon to endure is caused by the burden of sin. And all that was prefigured by type and foretold by prophecy is summarized in one short sentence by St. Peter, who looks back upon the Passion of our Blessed Lord as Moses and Isaiah had looked forward to it, and tells us that "His own Self bare our sins in His Body upon the Tree."*

For upon the Cross our Lord Jesus Christ brought to its climax that full and complete representation in His own Person of the entire human race, which was involved in the very nature and circumstances of His Incarnation. He suffered, and suffered intensely, in Body, sounding to their utmost depths all possibilities of human anguish. But He suffered more intensely still in Spirit, since He took upon Himself the fearful burden of all the sins of all the whole world, and bore it in all its weight, and in all its unimaginable horror. For the race had, not only to pay the penalty of its sin, but to realize and feel that sin, as it actually is, "in Him."

We note three distinct stages in our Saviour's acceptance of this dread and mysterious burden.

I. There was, first of all, the close and life-long association with sinners which necessarily resulted from His coming as Man upon earth.

We fail, very often, to recognize this element in His Self-Sacrifice—the suffering involved in His constant companionship with those who

* 1 Peter ii. 24.

were tainted with sin. Yet this contact with evil must have been, to Him, most exquisitely painful. "I have been in hell," said a very holy man once, when the train by which he was travelling stopped at last, and he was enabled to escape from the company of a horde of race-course loafers, whose conversation reeked with obscene oaths and foul impurity. He had learnt for himself something of the suffering which comes to a pure and sensitive nature from association with evil in its grosser and more repulsive forms. It filled his whole soul with unspeakable loathing, and brought suffering almost beyond his powers of endurance. We can imagine, too, what it would mean to ourselves to be forced into close and perpetual contact, day after day, with the most hardened criminals in our prisons, the lowest women in our streets. Yet we ourselves are stained with sin, and are debarred by that very fact from feeling it in its true hatefulness and horror. And we can scarcely form even the faintest conception of what it must have been to the Incarnate Son of the Most High, seeing and feeling evil as it really is, hating it and recoiling from it with all the force and intensity of His Being, to be brought into constant and intimate association with those who had offered it a home—to trace its ravages, only too plainly, even in the men and women who were nearest and dearest to Him—to be forced, by His very Mission, to seek out those who were lost—to "eat and drink

with publicans and sinners"*—to have among His own immediate followers one whom He Himself could only describe as a "devil"†—to have to give Himself up into the hands of those who had made evil their good. We regard the Saviour's Passion sometimes, as restricted to the Six Hours of His Crucifixion, or at most as beginning only with the Scourging which preceded it. But it must have begun with His first realized contact with sinners, and have continued, almost unbroken, throughout His Life upon earth.

II. Next, and harder by far to bear, must have been the deep spiritual suffering involved in the endurance of temptation.

By association with sinners our Blessed Lord was brought into contact with evil. But that contact, so far, was only external. "Holy, guileless, undefiled," He was "separated from sinners,"‡ although He was so constantly in their company. Through His submission to temptation, however, evil was brought to bear actively upon Himself. He was made personally to experience its force and its malignity. Although there was no response to its allurements within His own perfect and spotless Human Nature, He could yet feel them, and the difficulty of resisting them, to the very full. And merely to feel this must have brought Him inconceivable pain.

* St. Matt. ix. 11. † St. John vi. 70. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.

Again, we can but dimly understand it; for we ourselves are predisposed towards sin, and further, by giving way to it, have blunted and dulled the very faculties which alone enable us to appreciate its dreadfulness. Yet we hate and loathe ourselves, sometimes, for feeling the real attractiveness of evil. The mere fact that we have experienced an actual desire to give way to it can bring almost unspeakable anguish. And to Him, in His perfect purity, His absolute holiness, it must have brought suffering beyond our powers of imagination to conceive to have the full force of temptation focussed and concentrated upon Himself; to be taught, by personal experience, to understand its power. More unbearable still must it have been to Him to be subjected to the malignant suggestions of spiritual beings who had given themselves wholly over to evil, and at last, as the climax of it all, to be forced into a death-struggle, thrice-repeated, with the very prince of the powers of darkness. If the mere contact with evil in others brought pain unimaginable to the Incarnate Son of God, what infinite intensity of spiritual suffering must have been involved in the endurance of actual temptation to evil by Him Who was tempted, not merely as an individual human being, but as the Representative of the race—and in even fuller measure still as its Redeemer—and that by Satan himself in person.

III. Yet the Saviour's acceptance of the burden of human sin entailed more even than this. It was essential to Redemption as we have seen, that mankind, as summed up in its Representative Head, should meet, and overcome, all the temptations which could appeal to man in a state of innocence, so that the Life which was to be laid down by the Second Adam as an Atonement for the sin of the race should have passed through the same ordeal of probation as that under which the first Adam fell. For without this, there could have been no true parallel between the transgression and the penalty. But there was another indispensable preliminary as well. The sin which was to be atoned for must itself be realized and felt before the Atonement could be offered. Without that realization, no true satisfaction could be made. Even with ourselves the confession which opens the way for forgiveness involves, not merely the formal acknowledgment of sin, but the consciousness and conviction of it. Sin must be realized as sin before it can be confessed. No reparation is possible until it has been brought home, in its real nature and its true hatefulness, to the conscience. And so it was, in fullest measure, with the Atonement which had to be made by the Redeemer of mankind. All the hideousness and horror of the sin which had corrupted and ruined the race, all its hatefulness and loathsomeness in God's sight, must be brought home to the

Heart of Him Who had come to make satisfaction for it. It was not enough for Him to see it from without. He must feel it within. In His Manhood He Who had become, not "a man" but "Man," must bear the fearful weight, not only of the particular transgression by which His predecessor in the Headship of Humanity fell, but also of all the sins in thought and word and deed of all the individual members of the whole human race. Even Jesus Christ could pay the price of sin only by dying for it; and even He could not die for it until He had felt it as it is.

Once more we cannot understand what this must have meant to our Blessed Lord. The mystery of it is far too great, and far too wide, and far too deep for human minds to comprehend. But perhaps the nearest approach to a realization of it may be obtained by thinking of it as follows: —

The shame and disgrace which follow upon some grave act of sin are often felt far more deeply by those who love the sinner than by the sinner himself. The wrong-doing of the son is brought home to the upright father, the pure-hearted mother, as it cannot be to the son himself, even in his most penitent moments. They realize it, and grieve over it, and sorrow for it, in exact proportion to the love which they bear for him. They feel it as in a manner, their own. It was committed by another; but the burden of it,

the pain of it, the shame of it, come upon themselves. Yet even they and their son do not stand in so close a relationship to one another as that in which Jesus Christ stands, in virtue of His Representative Human Nature, to every individual in the whole human race. The love which they feel for him to whom they have given birth is but a dim reflection of that which He feels for us all. And as the Second Adam, He is at the centre of all humanity. He is in absolute union with all its members. He is in closest touch with all their joys and sorrows. And therefore He could feel, in all its accumulated wickedness and horror, the sin of which they had all been guilty. So truly and so completely had He identified Himself with them, that He accepted their shame as His own shame, their guilt as His own guilt. And if His atoning work was to need no repetition and no addition—if He was to offer a perfect and sufficient Satisfaction for the sins of all mankind—then He must taste, once and for all, the bitterness of every sin which every man, woman and child ever had committed or ever should commit to the end of time, and feel the whole fury of the Wrath of God against them all. He must endure, in His own Comprehensive Humanity, the totality of that which every individual human being must have endured if it had been possible for sinners to see and feel their sins as they are in the sight of God.

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We cannot imagine it. The closer we approach the Cross, the more we realize that we cannot realize what the Cross means. We can but bow our heads before its profound and awful mystery, and accept with simple faith and deepest thankfulness the great fact which it declares.

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Yet something of this deep mystery we are bidden to learn as we meditate upon our Saviour's Cross and Passion. For, while the four evangelists unite in dismissing the physical side of the Great Tragedy in those three simple but eloquent words, "They crucified Him," they also unite in telling us of the awful change which came over the Scene of the Crucifixion.

At first it seems but an ordinary scene—common enough in those days—of purely human suffering. Three crosses stand there, side by side; three tortured figures hang upon them—and anyone who passes by may gaze, deride, and mock. The scribes and chief priests gibe and jeer; the soldiers throw their dice, and drink their sour wine; one single man and a little group of women look on in deepest sorrow. There is nothing to show that the Redeemer of all men is dying there for all men's sins. For three long hours the fierce sun beats pitilessly down, and the picture stands boldly out in the mid-day brightness. Then slowly, solemnly, comes that mysterious and awful change. A weird

gloom gathers and deepens, not only round the Cross, but over all the land—no natural darkness, no shadow cast by a passing cloud, the result of no eclipse, but a dense black pall, shrouding the Dying Sufferer from the sight of even those who stand by. No human eye may look upon Him now, as He fights through the last three hours of His Passion. In deepest awe, every voice is stilled. No word is spoken, even from the Cross itself. All is dark; and all is silent, as the hours wear slowly on. Then at last a Cry is heard—an exceeding bitter Cry, coming out of the thick darkness—the most terrible Cry that ever has been uttered since human hearts began to break, and human voices strove to give expression to sorrows and sufferings which could never be clothed in words:

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani."

Then, for a few brief moments, silence reigns again. And then the darkness slowly lifts, and the sun shines down from the western sky, and the awe-stricken bystanders look once again on the Face of the Dying Saviour, and watch Him as He bows His Head, and gives up the Ghost.

We are meant, surely, to learn what we may from that dread, mysterious Darkness, and from the Cry that rent it. Christian thought has never doubted that, while the Dying Redeemer was veiled from mortal eyes, unseen beings were

coming and going round the Cross; that one last assault of the powers of evil was taking place, one final, furious effort was being made by Satan himself to rob the Redemptive Death of its atoning value. And Christian faith has ever believed that that outward gloom symbolized and accompanied an even deeper and more dreadful darkness still, which came pressing down upon the Saviour's Soul as He realized and felt the last and most fearful consequence of sin—the alienation from God which it brings—the final abandonment by Him.

"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

What is "sin"?

Not mere disobedience to the Divine commands. Not the simple infraction of a code of arbitrary laws, which might, conceivably, have been other than they are. If sin had been no more than that, then, perhaps, it might have been met by a simple act of forgiveness. God might in that case have consented to forego the penalties which He had attached to it, and have received those who had been guilty of it back into His favour, treating their transgressions as though they had never taken place. A general amnesty, in short, might have been declared. But sin is very much more than disobedience. To make use of St. John's definition,* it is "lawlessness"—

* 1 John iii. 4.

not the mere state of being without law, but active and deliberate opposition to the Essential Laws of the Divine Being. Good is not good, let us remember once more, because God chooses to command it. It is good because God Himself *is* it. Evil is not evil because God chooses to forbid it. It is evil because God *is not* it. And therefore sin, in its very essence, involves rebellion against God, rejection of God. It is the wilful acceptance and appropriation of that which is foreign to God's own Being. Not merely as a punishment, but as an inevitable result, it brings alienation from God.

Clearly, then, the situation which sin causes cannot be brought to a close by a kindly act of Divine clemency. A formal forgiveness of the sinner would leave him a sinner still. For sin is not a mere act, or even a series of acts, but a state. Thoughts of sin, words of sin, deeds of sin, are but the vehicles through which the sin itself finds expression. They are only the symptoms of the evil which is festering within. And therefore it follows that no reparation for sin can be made, no forgiveness can either be given or received, until the sinner has learnt to see it, and himself to feel it, as it actually is in the Sight of God.

We find this ourselves in our own relations with one another. Somebody offends us, or injures us. We forgive him, fully and freely. We are ready to treat the offence, or the injury,

as though it had never been. Yet we feel—we cannot help feeling—that the real barrier between himself and us lies, not in the actual transgression itself, but in the fact that there is that in him which prompted or permitted him to commit it. And that barrier cannot be removed by any mere act of pardon. It can only be taken away by a total change of heart, which would render the offender for ever incapable of committing the fault again. He must come to see and feel it as it really is, to learn to hate it and repudiate it utterly and altogether, before even human forgiveness can take its full effect.

So it was necessary that our Lord Jesus Christ, dying upon the Cross, as the Second Adam, for the sins of all mankind, should first appropriate the sins of the fallen race which in His own Comprehensive Humanity He summed up and represented. And He could only take them upon Himself by actually feeling them in all their dreadfulness and reality—"giving," as it has been well said, "an absolute and unwavering consent to that Wrath of God which went out against sin—not deprecating it, not begging that it might be appeased with anything less than justice, not minimizing the sin against which it went out, effecting no kind of composition with it, but going the whole length with it, and sympathizing with its entire reach and range of indignation and fury."

In other words, the contact with evil, which

had come first by association with sinners, and then, more closely, by endurance of personal temptation, must now come even closer still. The Sinless Sufferer, as summarizing the sinful race, must feel what sin is by experiencing what sin brings, not only in pain, not only in shame, but also in the separation from God which it entails. The Sin-Bearing must be added to the pangs of Crucifixion. And so Jesus Christ our Lord, in the awful words of the sacred writer, was "made to *be sin* on our behalf."* He could "redeem us from the curse of the law" only by "becoming a curse for us."† St. Paul means that the whole sin of the race which the Saviour represented was so laid upon Him, so brought home to His inmost consciousness, that He could take it, and feel it, and appropriate it, and bear it as His own. And in the closing hours of His Passion, over and above the physical pangs of crucifixion, and in addition even to the last fierce conflict with the personal powers of darkness, there fell upon the Dying Sufferer the terrible sense of utter abandonment by God. No Voice from above came now to comfort and support Him. He could pray: but He could no longer feel that His prayers were heard. Even the realization of His own Divine Sonship was withdrawn. It is "My God," that He cries now, not, as always before, "My Father." Rejected by earth, He seemed also to be deserted by

* 2 Cor. v. 21. † Gal. iii. 13.

Heaven. In the fullest and completest sense of the words, He had to "tread the winepress alone."* *That* was the culmination and climax of all His Sufferings, the last and worst Terror of the Cross. As representing and as summing up all mankind He felt it—that "horror of great darkness"—that fearful consequence of the sin which had brought Him down from heaven to die. To its uttermost dregs, He drank that bitter cup.

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Once more, we cannot understand it. The mystery of it passes all human comprehension. We can but accept the blessed fact that Jesus Christ our Lord, true Man, but yet the Very and Eternal Son of God, atoned for all the sins of all mankind by the Offering of His own Perfect Human Life upon the Cross of Calvary. The pain and suffering which sin causes; the humiliation and shame which sin brings; even the alienation and separation from God which sin entails—He gathered them all up, and took them into Himself, and felt them, and bore them, that He might pay the penalty of sin to the very last farthing.

And this He did in that wondrous, all-embracing Humanity in which each one of us has part and share; so that each one of us can say with the great apostle, "*I* have been crucified with Christ."†

* Isaiah lxiii. 3. † Gal. ii. 20.

VI.

The Death of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy precious Death . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

THE Death of our Lord Jesus Christ is inseparable from His "Cross and Passion." The two together make up one great Offering in atonement for the sin of the world. It is not only that Christ's Death brings home to us, as nothing else can, the heinousness of sin. It is that even the Saviour could not have redeemed us merely by suffering the pain and the shame which sin brings, or even by taking upon Himself the mysterious burden of sin, without also dying. For death is "the wages of sin,"* following upon it as a necessary and inevitable consequence. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."† So the Divine warning had run when man, in a state of innocence, entered upon his probation. And on the day when he yielded to temptation, the threat was fulfilled; and he passed under the dominion

* Rom. vi. 23. † Gen. ii. 17.

of death. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin."* Sin is the rejection of God, Who is Life; and this death affected, not only Adam himself, but all men and women who should come after him, as inheriting from him the nature which sin had degraded and spoiled. It "reigned even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression"†—infants, who as yet had been guilty of no actual sin of their own. Therefore it was requisite that our Blessed Lord, as representing the whole sin-stained race, should not only suffer for sin, but should also die. And His Death, together with His "Cross and Passion," formed one great Sacrifice and Satisfaction, covering the whole field of human iniquity, and acknowledging the justice of the Divine wrath against it.

Yet the Litany makes His "precious Death and Burial" the substance of a separate petition; and it does so because the Death of Jesus Christ, in itself, involved a distinct act of His Will. Death could not be demanded of Him, or exacted from Him, because He was personally without sin. He had not inherited the nature which had passed under its dominion; and He had committed no transgression of His own. Death could not even have followed as a necessary result of the pain and exhaustion of crucifixion. Just as His enemies could not take Him until His "Hour" was come, and He surrendered Himself into their

* Rom. v. 12. † Rom. v. 14.

hands, so His Life had to be given up, voluntarily and freely, by Himself. This truth is implied in the very character of His Death as an "Offering" for sin: for that which is compulsorily taken cannot be "offered." And it is stated in set and formal terms, by our Blessed Lord Himself, as the ground on which His Sacrifice was acceptable in the Divine Sight. "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My Life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."* It is noticeable, too, that all the four evangelists avoid making use of the expression "He died." They say, instead, "He yielded up His Spirit"† or "He gave up the ghost,"‡ thus emphasizing the voluntary character of Christ's final act of obedience. And the centurion bore witness to the same great truth by his awe-stricken comment, "Truly this Man was the Son of God."§ He had doubtless seen many men die from crucifixion: but never had he seen one die like this Man. Death came to the crucified, as an invariable rule, by gradual exhaustion. The life of the sufferer slowly ebbed away; and a "loud cry" just before the moment when soul and body parted was, normally, a physical impossibility. Yet such a cry Christ uttered; and then, immediately, He "bowed His Head,

* St. John x. 17, 18. † St. Matt. xxvii. 50.
‡ St. Mark xv. 37. § St. Mark xv. 39.

and gave up His Spirit." It was one more sign that His Death was the act of His own Free Will, not the enforced relinquishment of that which He could no longer retain. Just as He had voluntarily submitted to the pain of association with sinners, the pain involved in enduring temptation, the pain of the Cross, and the pain of realizing and bearing the sin of all mankind, so He submitted now to the greatest pain of all—the pain of dying.

The question has often been asked, "Why did Jesus Christ dread death so intensely?" That He did so dread it we cannot doubt. Its shadow seems always to have been upon Him. There is an old tradition to the effect that though He sometimes shed tears, He was never seen to smile. This legend may or may not be true. Probably it is not, since the Saviour came into close and intimate touch with human life in all its varying aspects, and could "rejoice with them that do rejoice" as well as "weep with them that weep." And it is difficult to believe that He never had a smile at least for little children But it is noticeable, at any rate, that the occasions of innocent festivity at which He vouchsafed His Presence—the marriage at Cana, the feast at Levi's house, and so on—all came at the outset of His Ministry, while Death was still remote. Later on He has no heart for them. The shadow is growing darker. His own words

show us too, with what intensity of foreboding He looks forward to His Death. Even in His most joyous moments, the thought of it falls like a pall upon Him. "Certain Greeks," for example, come to St. Philip, and express a strong desire to "see Jesus." St. Philip consults St. Andrew, with whom he seems to have been on terms of special intimacy, and the two together tell the Saviour on what errand the men have come. He sees in their request an anticipation of the Great Day when the Gentile host shall be gathered in—the "great multitudes which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues," which should "stand before the Throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands." Already He "sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied." And He breaks out into joyous thanksgiving. "Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified."* Then He remembers the price at which this "glory" must be won; and we note an instantaneous change of tone. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. . . . Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."†

A little later the shadow grows darker still.

* St. John xii. 23. † St. John xii. 24, 27.

It is the Eve of the Passion. The Saviour leaves the Upper Room, and goes with His disciples towards Gethsemane. The "prince of this world" draws near. Already He is in the throes of that terrible conflict in which the fullest force of Satanic malignity is brought to bear upon Him. He is brought face to face with the awful ordeal that awaits Him. He is "greatly amazed, and sore troubled." And He breaks out into an anguished cry—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."* All through His Ministry He has foreseen His Death. He has lived in the constant anticipation of it. He has known when it must come. He has known the form in which it must come. But He has never fully realized its horror until now. And the dread of it almost breaks Him down.

What was the cause of this overwhelming anguish? All men naturally shrink from death; and to some the thought of it is an ever-present terror. But millions have gone out to meet it without a sign of fear. Yet Christ showed that He feared it. He had to die by crucifixion But many men, and women too, have gone out to die even that death, knowing full well what awaited them, with perfect calmness and self-possession. Yet Christ almost gave way at the thought of it. Must we attribute to the Son of Man, the Perfect Man, an element of human weakness from which many of His followers

* St. Matt. xxvi. 38.

would seem to have been free? Now that death was actually close upon Him, was He shrinking from it, His heart failing Him for fear? He had become Incarnate, and had lived as Man among men, in order that He might die as Man for men. Now that the hour had come for Him to carry out this intention, determined upon "or ever the earth and the world were made," why was it that He felt this overpowering dread?

The answer is, that death meant far more to our Lord Jesus Christ than it has ever meant, or can ever mean, to anyone who has died before or since, or to anyone who still has to die. He alone endured human death in its true character, and in all its undiluted dreadfulness. And He endured it, not merely as an individual human being, but as the Second Adam, in Whom the entire human race was summed up. Death as, without Him, it would have affected all mankind, was accepted by Him. All its terrors were poured out upon Him. He "tasted death," the sacred writer tells us, "for every man."* The cup of suffering which death involved, and which must otherwise have been drunk by all who died, was drained for them by Him. Just as He had represented us all in enduring temptation, in suffering the pain and shame which sin brings, and in bearing its burden of guilt and the alienation from God which follows it, so He represented us all in dying.

* Heb. ii. 9.

Death, it would seem, regarded even as the mere separation of soul from body, was not originally intended for man. It cannot be said that he was created immortal. It was rather that, being liable to death, in this lower sense, as a possibility, he was preserved from dying by the gift of the fruit of the "Tree of Life." What that mysterious metaphor actually signified, we do not know. It may have been that some sacramental ordinance was provided, through which the natural consequences of mortality were kept at bay. It may have been that to the first Head of our race, in his unfallen condition, such intercourse and communion with the Divine were permitted that, while they lasted, "mortality," in him, was "swallowed up in life." We do not know. All that seems certain is that, in the original intention of the Creator, man was to be subjected to a period of earthly probation; that he was to be called upon to meet temptation in various forms, all of which it was perfectly possible for him to overcome; and that if he passed successfully through this ordeal, by means of which his nature, spotless at first with the purity of natural innocence, would become firmly and finally fixed and set in harmony with the Divine Will, he should pass to the higher and unending life of the world unseen, not by death, but by a glorious translation.

In this case there would have been no need

for the separation of his soul from his body. Such a severance, in fact, would have rendered the translation incomplete; for the body, like the soul, is a part of the man, and must share in his exaltation. Nothing more would have been needed than that the material element in his composite being should be spiritualized, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," as the Saviour's sacred Body was at the instant of His Resurrection. And of this magnificent destiny, as awaiting sinless man, we have an illustration—as has already been briefly noted—in our Blessed Lord's Transfiguration. Having passed triumphantly, as Man, through every form of temptation which unfallen man could be called upon to endure, He could, if so He had willed, have gone to His reward without dying. The change which actually took place in His Body at the moment of His Resurrection might have taken place in it now. Already there streamed out from it that dazzling radiance with which man, in his final glorification, can be enwrapped. Heaven lay open before Him. Nothing prevented Him, in His Humanity, from entering into it. And if that Humanity was to be offered as a Sacrifice for the sins of our fallen race, a distinct and separate renunciation of His right to enter into Life was necessary. He must voluntarily forego that which by His Life of unswerving obedience to the Divine Will He had won. So He turned His back, as it were, to the

open door, gave up His right, and went down the mountain-side on His way to Calvary.

This was a picture of that glorious destiny which would have closed man's earthly probation if sin had never entered into the world, "and death by sin." Temptation must have been endured, for the building-up and fixing of character. But suffering would have been escaped; shame would have been unknown; and life would not have been closed by the divorce of soul from body.

It is, of course, perfectly true that death was in the world, as affecting animals, long before earth was first trodden by the foot of man. Of this we find conclusive proof in the contents of the geological strata. There we have the unmistakable relics of millions of creatures, from the lowest forms almost to the very highest, which lived and died countless ages before the advent of humanity. And it is only because they died that we know that they ever lived. Their petrified remains are their own perpetual tombstones. And this fact has frequently been cited in disproof of the Scriptural statement to the effect that death "entered into the world"* as a consequence of human sin. But St. Paul, in making this assertion, is not speaking of the world of nature. He is speaking of the world regarded as the dwelling-place of man. He is speaking of the advent of death into the human

* Rom. v. 12.

sphere. And death, as it affects animals, is a totally different thing from death as it affected man. The Preacher fell very far short of the truth when he wrote his bitter lament, half in unbelief and half in despair, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no preeminence over a beast; for all is vanity: all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."† For he regarded death merely as the termination of earthly life—the simple separation of soul from body—the passing into corruption of the material frame which lived and moved and had its being only so long as the life principle remained within it. And in the case of animals it is so. An animal is only a duality. It has a physical body, and it has a psychical "soul": and death is the sundering of the tie between them. Death, to an animal, is a purely natural thing, originally designed as the normal close of its earthly career, and involving no dislocation of its being. But man is a trinity. He possesses, not only a material body and an immaterial "soul," which link him with the creatures beneath him, but also a spirit which links him with God. In all those three parts of his composite being he was intended for unending existence in the spiritual sphere. So that death, for him, is an unnatural thing,

* Eccles. iii. 19, 20.

involving the rending asunder of that which God had joined together, and which must remain united, or become reunited, if his primary destiny is to be fulfilled.

More than this, there is a terrible element in death as it affected man which there is not, and cannot be, in death as affecting animals. For death, with men, is a punishment, while with animals it is not. It came upon man as the penal consequence of sin, and as the last expression of God's wrath against it. "Death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* It was not merely that by choosing to cultivate the animal side of his nature man fell under the dominion of death as it affects animals. It was that to him, as the possessor of a spiritual nature which linked him with God, it brought consequences which affected his spirit. It is impossible to read the Bible with any degree of attention without noticing that a peculiar dreadfulness is attached to the idea of death in connection with man. And this dreadfulness is regarded as lying in the fact that the severance between body and spirit, as resulting from sin, is only the symbol of a worse separation still which sin entails—that of the spirit from God, a separation which, but for the Death of Christ, must have been eternal.

This was typified by the Expulsion from Eden. Our first parents are represented as dwelling, so long as they maintained their pristine innocence,

* Rom. v. 12.

not only in the midst of all earthly delights, but in the immediate Presence of God, and in constant converse and communion with Him. "The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day."* "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."† "The Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them."‡ But with sin came at once the sense of separation. "The man and his wife hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord God."§ This instinctive realization of the consequences of their act was confirmed by the Divine Sentence. "The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever:—therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. . . . He drove out the man."‖ And return was impossible, because the sin itself could not be undone. The man and his wife were shut out from the Divine Presence; and the Lord God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life."¶

* Gen. iii. 8. † Gen. ii. 16, 17. ‡ Gen. ii. 19.
§ Gen. iii. 8. ‖ Gen. iii. 22, etc. ¶ Gen. iii. 24.

Throughout the Bible we find this awful sense of the separation from God which sin entails, felt by sinners and saints alike. Cain felt it. "From Thy Face shall I be hid"* was his bitter cry, when the doom fell upon him for the murder of his brother. Gideon felt it, when the Heavenly Messenger came to him, and "put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes" which he had offered, so that "there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed them."† "Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord," we are told. And instantly the sense of sin came upon him, together with the realization of its awful consequences. "Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! forasmuch as I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face."‡ Manoah felt it, when the mysterious Visitor came to foretell the birth of Samson, and "did wondrously," ascending in the flame of the altar. "Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God."§ Job felt it at the moment of his deepest realization of the Divine Power and Presence. "I had heard of Thee," he cried, "by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."‖ Isaiah felt it, when he saw the Vision of the Lord surrounded by the Seraphim. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because

* Gen. iv. 14. † Judges vi. 21. ‡ Judges vi. 22.
§ Judges xiii. 22. ‖ Job xlii. 5, 6.

I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."* St. Peter felt it, when for one brief moment the sense of his Master's Divinity flashed in upon him. "Depart from me," he cried, in terror; "for I am a sinful man, O Lord."† Even St. John felt it. "I saw in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man . . . and when I saw Him I fell at His Feet as one dead."‡ And the cry of the wicked to the mountains and the rocks, on the Great Day of the Wrath of the Lamb, is "Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of Him that sitteth on the Throne."§

Now it is the sense of separation from God—final, complete, and irremediable—as the last consequence of sin, felt and realized to the uttermost in the Awfulness of His Presence, which is summed up in the Scriptural idea of death as affecting man. Death, to him, is regarded as the close of a probation in which he has utterly failed, which cannot be extended or repeated, and the only sequel to which is unending existence under conditions with which all his natural affinities have been destroyed. Death regarded merely as annihilation would be dreadful enough to a being constituted as man is, with the craving for immortality inherent within him, and the consciousness of powers

* Isaiah vi. 5. † St. Luke v. 8. ‡ Rev. i. 13, 17.
§ Rev. vi. 15, 16.

and capacities for which earthly life offers no adequate scope or satisfaction. But infinitely more fearful is the idea of death as the introduction to eternal existence, in which the soul is absolutely shut off from God, while yet it cannot escape from His Presence. Swift draws a terrible picture of the misery of the Struldbrugs—men and women who cannot die, but who have lost all that makes life even tolerable—who can no longer enjoy, and can only suffer. More appalling by far is the thought of an immortality in the spiritual sphere with all capacity for spiritual happiness destroyed—the soul fearing God, hating God, loathing God, yet unable to escape from God—doomed to dwell for ever in the blinding burning radiance that streams from the Great White Throne. It is not without reason that the sacred writers describe the Nature of God and the torment of hell by one and the same term—Fire! Heaven itself would be hell to the soul that is not fitted for heaven. And while it was tainted with sin, no soul could be fitted for heaven—for the Presence of Him Who is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." The separation which sin entails between the soul and God is not a local one. It is "a great gulf fixed" of moral nature, similar to that which yawned between Dives and Lazarus, but infinitely greater. And "death" in the Scriptural sense, as affecting man, is the crossing of this gulf, the arrival on the further shore, from which return is impossible.

This, and not merely the separation of soul from body, is "the wages of sin."

The question has often been asked, "From what did the Death of Christ deliver us? It was not from bodily death, for men still have to die. It could not have been from eternal death, for that death Christ did not endure. From what form of death, then, or from what aspect of death, are we delivered by the Death of Jesus Christ?"

The answer is that, by dying, our Saviour took away all that made death really terrible. "The sting of death is sin;"* and by the Death of Christ that "sting" was drawn. Dying as the Representative Head of our race, accepting death as the righteous retribution for human transgressions, "tasting" it "for every man,"† He explored and exhausted all its terrors, Himself enduring all the dreadfulness which, as "the wages of sin," it could bring. The Death of Jesus Christ is absolutely unique. It was not the death of a human individual: it was the death of all human individuals summarized in Him. It was not the death that comes upon animals. It was not even the death that men and women have to die now. It was death in its connection with sin. It was death regarded as the last expression of the Divine wrath against sin. It was the death which would have been died by all the members

* 1 Cor. xv. 56. † Heb. ii. 9.

of the race if no Redeemer had been found to take the penalty of their sins upon Himself. It was the Death which only the Eternal Son of God, Incarnate as the Second Adam, could have died as representing us all. In dying, Christ drank the cup of death's bitterness to the uttermost dregs; while yet, in His all-embracing Humanity, He broke free from it, and proved Himself its Master. And by so doing He "abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel."*

And the effects of His Death, like those of His "Cross and Passion," are retrospective. They cover all mankind, because He represented all mankind. Those who came before Him share in them, as well as those who came after Him. Death was robbed of its "sting" for the first Adam himself, and for all his descendants. It never has been, it is not now, and it never will be what it would have been for man if Christ had not died; for it is no longer the symbol of the final and hopeless separation from God which comes as the last consequence of sin. We still have to die, because sin is in us still, and "corruption cannot inherit incorruption."† We still shrink from dying, because death, regarded even in its limited sense as the severance of the mortal from the immortal, is an unnatural thing, against which body, soul, and spirit alike rebel. But its bitterness has gone for ever, because Jesus

* 2 Tim. i. 10. † 1 Cor. xv. 50.

Christ, dying for human sin as the Representative of Mankind, has endured it all. "Christ died for us;" * and "we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died: and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again."† And "through the grave and gate of death we pass to our joyful resurrection."

* Rom. v. 8. † 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

VII.

The Descent into Hades of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy precious Death and Burial, Good Lord, deliver us."

So far as human knowledge is concerned, there is a hiatus between our Saviour's Death and His Resurrection. His earthly life was lived in the sight of men. They saw Him as a newly-born Babe in His manger-cradle. They saw Him growing from infancy into childhood, from childhood into youth, from youth into the maturity of manhood. All that He did, day by day, in the home at Nazareth, in the carpenter's shop, in the social life of the village, in the religious life of the synagogue and the Temple, was open to observation. Throughout His three years' Ministry men bore Him company. They saw His acts of power: they listened to His teaching. When that Ministry came to an end, men saw Him arrested, accused, tried, sentenced, led out to execution. When He was nailed to the Cross men saw Him die. And after He rose

from the dead men saw Him again in the Body, heard Him speaking, touched Him, handled Him, examined the marks of the nails in His Hands and His Feet, and the print of the spear in His Side.

But of what passed between His Death and His Resurrection men saw nothing. His Soul passed out of His Body—that was evident enough. His worst enemies were convinced that He had really died: and Pilate gave orders that the Body should be taken down from the Cross. His best friends never doubted it: and Joseph of Arimathæa wrapped the Body in spices, and laid It in his own new tomb. For six and thirty hours His Soul remained apart from His Body, Which lay motionless and lifeless in the tomb. At the end of that time It returned into His Body. But of what happened to It during that interval—where It went, what It did—human observation can tell us nothing.

Revelation, however, bridges over the chasm, and tells us what took place during that mysterious interval which the Litany sums up as His "Burial." From the Saviour's own words to the repentant thief we learn that He anticipated that, at the moment of death, His Human Soul would pass into that place—or, to speak more correctly, perhaps, that spiritual plane—which is variously known as "Paradise," "Hades," and "the Intermediate State"—the "Hell" of the Apostles' Creed. "To-day shalt

thou be with Me in Paradise." And St. Paul tells us that that anticipation was realized: that the dead Christ, living still in the spirit, joined the souls of those who had died before Him, passing into that mysterious place of waiting which comes between death and judgment; and that He remained there until the moment of His Resurrection. He tells us that the Saviour's Soul, freed from those ties and limitations of the Body which for three and thirty years had restricted Its activities, was enabled to make full use of powers and faculties which to a great extent had lain latent before. "Being put to death in the Flesh," says the apostle, He was "quickened in the Spirit."* He tells us that the liberated Soul entered into a new sphere of activity, the scope of its beneficial labours being immeasurably extended. "He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."† And he also tells us the object of that wonderful preaching. "Unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."‡

We enter here a domain of the deepest mystery, into which little more than this one glimpse is permitted us. We may not dogmatize about it,

* 1 Peter iii. 18. † 1 Peter iii. 19, 20. ‡ 1 Peter iv. 6.

or build upon St. Peter's words a structure which they were never intended to bear. But at least they teach us this, that Jesus Christ, Who in His Divinity is always in Paradise, just as He is always in heaven and on earth, has sojourned in it under the conditions of humanity. He "went down into Hades," and remained there during those thirty-six hours of earthly time, not because He is the Son of God, but because He is the Son of Man. It was in His Human Nature that He died; and it was in His Human Nature that He passed into Paradise. He went there, moreover—and this is the point with which we are specially concerned—not as an individual human being fulfilling his own personal destiny, but as the Second Adam, the sinless Representative of all mankind. And, as that Representative, He waged a conflict and won a victory in the results of which all mankind may share.

The teaching of Holy Scripture is, not only that by dying Jesus Christ overcame death, and deprived it of its "sting," but also that after death He rifled death's domain, and despoiled it of its prey. "Thou art gone up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men."* So wrote the Psalmist a thousand years before Christ died, picturing the coming Redeemer as a great Conqueror returning to His triumph with a host of prisoners in His train. And St. Paul treats this prophetic

* Psalm lxviii. 18.

anticipation as a fact which the Saviour has actually accomplished. "Wherefore he saith,

When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts unto men.

Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended (first) into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."*

It is true, of course, that the expression "the lower parts of the earth" has been variously interpreted. Some expositors consider that the reference is to our Lord's earthly Life, and not to His sojourn in Paradise. But there seems no doubt whatever that the phrase in question was commonly used among the Jews to designate Hades; and the general consensus of opinion is that St. Paul employed it in this sense, and intended to signify that when the Saviour returned to heaven He bore with Him in His train, as it were, a host of captives whom He had delivered from the bondage of Satan and of death. The reference, probably, is to the fruits of that wonderful "preaching" of which St. Peter tells us. Entering into Paradise as the Representative Man, showing by His very Presence there in Human Form and Nature that He had passed through "the grave and gate of death," bearing in Hands and Feet and Side the tokens of that

* Ephes. iv. 8, etc.

all-sufficient Sacrifice which He had offered up, not for His own sins, but for the sins of others, He was enabled to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to those who had never heard upon earth the Message of God's great Love to man. Even to those persistent sinners of old who had undergone the terrible anticipation of the Final Judgment, it came. Not only "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but also that they might live according to God in the spirit," it was delivered. And it did not fall upon deaf ears; it came to hearts which were hardened no longer. Jesus Christ, preaching to the souls of the dead as the Representative Man, won those souls, or many of them, for Himself as the fruits of His victory. He set them free from the bondage in which they were held. He added them to the numbers, not only of the redeemed, but of those who should attain to final salvation. And returning into heaven —again as the Representative Man—He could claim them as the trophies of which Satan and his dark spirits had been despoiled.

Is it too much to hope, and to believe, that here we have a bright ray of light on that mysterious subject of the Divine intentions with regard to those who never hear the Message of Salvation upon earth? Even now, nearly two thousand years after the Death of Christ, not one fourth of living mankind has been even nominally won to Him. The task of proclaiming

the glad tidings has been entrusted to men; but human indifference and human neglect—to say nothing of human sin—have prevented that great task from being fully carried out. In every minute of every hour in every day some soul passes into the unseen world without having heard the Name of Christ. "And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Even if the Church were to take up that neglected duty in real earnest now; even if the dream of the enthusiast were fulfilled, and the message of the Gospel were carried to every living soul before the present generation has passed away—still there would be those thousands of millions, heathen through no fault of their own, who have been called from earth without having heard it. What of these? Are they eternally, irrecoverably "lost" because they did not accept that which was never offered to them? Will Christ be for ever satisfied with the salvation of the few when He came to win salvation for mankind, and contentedly leave the many to perish everlastingly?

But this is not all. There are millions and millions more who have heard the Gospel Message, but to whom it has come only in a marred and mutilated form—such as that in which it was presented by Calvin. They have rejected it. Yet it is not the true Gospel that they have rejected; it is only a caricature of the Gospel.

Are these "lost" too? Others, again, have heard it, but have not accepted it through mental incapacity to do so—the invincible ignorance" of the theologian. Are these "lost" also?

We ask these questions: the human heart rebels against an answer in the affirmative; it cannot, will not believe that the Judge of all the earth can be guilty of the hideous injustice of dooming any single soul to loss or destruction as a "punishment" for rejecting an offer which was never made to it, or which was never rightly and fully understood; and it cannot, will not rest satisfied with vague assurances that the matter may safely be left to "the uncovenanted mercies of God." It craves for something more. Each fresh realization of the length, breadth, depth, and height of the Divine Love causes it to feel that craving more intensely. And we find the reply to it, surely, in that Mission of Christ in Hades, in which souls which had *not* heard the Message of Salvation while they lived on earth, heard it after earth from His own Lips; saw it in His very Presence among them as the Man Who had died, not because He must but because He would—not for His own sins, but for their sins and for the sins of all mankind.

But even this is not all. It would be something to us, no doubt, to know that Jesus Christ Himself "preached to the spirits in prison which aforetime were disobedient in the days of Noah."

It would show us, at any rate, that "there is a wideness in God's mercy" which has been overlooked by those who teach that salvation can only be won, under any circumstances, by the soul which has accepted Christ's Name and Christ's service before it is called away from earth. But to us, after all, with those conceptions of time from which human thought cannot set itself free, this is but a partial solution of the great problem. For there are still those souls to be thought of which entered Hades after Christ left it—sharing with those which He found there the ignorance of His Name during their life on earth, but not enjoying with them the benefits of His "preaching" after it. What of them? Are they to suffer an everlasting doom for the non-acceptance of a Message which has never been brought to them? Are the millions who die as heathen now to be "lost" for ever?

Again, however, the answer comes from Christ's Descent into Hades. He went there, not as an individual man, but as Mankind's Representative and Epitome. The conditions under which He sojourned there were not unique, affecting Himself alone in His Divine Personality. They were those which apply to all human souls while they remain there until the day of Judgment. And they altogether upset certain notions which are very commonly held with regard to life in the Intermediate State.

They show, for instance, that death must not be regarded as "a sleep and a forgetting." The body sleeps, no doubt; but the soul does not. That is "quickened"—made even more alive than it was upon earth. Death is succeeded by no prolonged period of unconsciousness. The soul lies in no deep trance until it is awakened by the summons of the Last Trumpet. As soon as it is set free from the ties of the body it finds itself in the full possession of all its faculties, and all its energies, with capacities of which it never dreamed before, powers which it knew, at best, only in germ. Death is only the liberation of the incorruptible spirit from the ties of mortality. Christ did not "sleep" during those six and thirty hours which elapsed between His Death and Resurrection. His Body slept; but His Soul remained awake, and passed into Paradise fully aware of what It had won by its voluntary separation from the Body. And though He had said, after the death of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep," He also said, "I go, that I may awake him out of sleep;"* and He did so by summoning the living soul to enter once more into the lifeless body, from which it had been separated by the stroke of death.

There is nothing whatever to show that the soul of Lazarus was unconscious while his body lay in the tomb; neither is such teaching to be found in any other part of Scripture. In every

* St. John xi. 11.

one of those few glimpses, indeed, which are vouchsafed to us of the life beyond the grave, the spirits of the dead are shown to us in full consciousness—Dives pleading with Abraham for an alleviation of his torments ;* Moses and Elijah speaking to the transfigured Saviour of " the decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem ; "† St. Paul in Paradise and in the third heaven seeing sights which he could never describe, and hearing " unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter ; "‡ the " souls underneath the altar " crying out for the avenging of their blood that was shed upon earth.§ Certainly there is nothing whatever in the pages of Holy Writ to justify the idea that the soul lies unconscious after its separation from the body. All the evidence lies in the opposite direction.

Further, the conditions under which the Saviour sojourned in Hades show us that death involves the soul in no loss of activity. We speak of the dead as " at rest " ; and we are certainly told that " the dead which die in the Lord " are blessed since they " rest from their labours."‖ But the idea which is embodied in the term " labour " is very different from that which underlies the term of " work." We sentence criminals to " hard labour," not to hard work. " Labour " involves effort and fatigue : " work "

* St. Luke xvi. 24. † St. Luke ix. 30, 31. ‡ 2 Cor. xii. 4.
§ Rev. vi. 9. ‖ Rev. xiv. 13.

signifies rather the normal activity of the faculties, applied in the direction for which they are naturally intended. It is so with God. "My Father worketh even until now" says the Saviour, "and I work."* And we are told even of the "resting" dead, that "their works follow with them."† Certainly the "works" of the Saviour did so. He did not remain passive in Paradise. He carried on His Ministry there just as He had done on earth. He called together the souls of the "disobedient" dead. He proclaimed to them the tidings of the Redemption which He had won. And this He did, let us recollect once more, not as God, but as Man—in that Representative Humanity in which He had lived and died on earth, and in which He had "descended into Hades."

Surely we may learn from this, not only that Christ Jesus strove to win souls for Himself in that mysterious interval which elapsed between His Death and His Resurrection, but also that His faithful soldiers and servants may do the same—*will* do the same—when they are called away from the earth to the life beyond the grave. God, in His Wisdom, has committed the "ministry of reconciliation" to men. On earth they are called to the task and privilege of "working together with Him," in order that human souls may be brought into His everlasting kingdom. Why not after earth as well? The task is not

* St. John v. 17. † Rev. xiv. 13.

completed here. Only a small proportion of mankind are reached by the message of the Gospel before they die. Is it fanciful, is it not rather justifiable from the Representative Ministry of Jesus Christ Himself as exercised in Hades, to believe that just as He associates men with Himself in the great work of "reconciliation" here, so He employs them in the same blessed duty there; that, while they "rest from their labours," "their works follow with them;" that every soul has a real chance of accepting the Message of Divine Love, either on earth, or else after earth; that the Gospel which once was preached to the souls of the dead in Paradise by Himself in Person is preached there by human ministers now; that death does not bring the work of the winner of souls to an end, but only opens out before him a wider sphere of activity; that he, too, though he dies in the flesh, is "quickened" in the spirit, and enabled to employ new powers and fuller activities in his Master's service? We wonder, sometimes, why those who seem best qualified to win souls for Christ, and are on fire with eager desire to do so, are often called away in the plenitude of their powers, at the very outset of their ministry. But the wonder disappears if their powers can still be used, and if the sphere of their ministry is merely exchanged for another. There may be rejection of God's message in Hades; there may be persistence in unbelief and in evil. We do

not know. But there must be the possibility of conversion, at any rate in those who have never had the opportunity of hearing the Message upon earth, or Christ would never have preached there. And it may very well be that Hades, which was raided then by Christ Himself in Person, is raided by Him through human ministers still; that "captivity" is still being "led captive"; and that hosts of prisoners rescued from death's domain are still being added to the Saviour's train.

So, at any rate, Charles Spurgeon thought, with reference to a wider sphere even than that of Hades; and in his "Final Manifesto," written shortly before he died, he expressed his hope and belief. I make no apology for quoting his burning words:—

"In the forty years of my own ministry, I have only touched the hem of the garment of divine truth; but what virtue has flowed out of it! The Word is like its Author, infinite, immeasurable, without end. If you were ordained to be a preacher throughout eternity, you would have before you a theme equal to everlasting demands. Brothers, shall we each have a pulpit somewhere amongst the spheres? Shall we have a parish of millions of leagues? Shall we have voices so strengthened as to reach attentive constellations? Shall we be witnesses for the Lord of grace to myriads of worlds which will be wonderstruck when they hear of the Incarnate

God? Shall we be surrounded by pure intelligences enquiring and searching into the mystery of God manifest in the flesh? Will the unfallen worlds desire to be instructed in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God? And will each one of us have his own tale to tell of our experience of infinite love? I think so, since the Lord hath saved us 'to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God.'"

And if the great Baptist preacher could think and write like this, surely we, to whom the wonderful truth of the Intermediate State, with all that it implies, has been opened out, may well hope and believe that not "pure intelligences" in "unfallen worlds" only, but human souls, tied and bound with the chain of their sins, who have had no opportunity of hearing the Gospel Message on earth, may be set free through the preaching of Christ's ministers in that mysterious realm which Christ Himself, as the Representative Man, visited after He died, and in which He proclaimed the glad tidings of the Redemption which He had won for all mankind by the merits of His Passion and His Death.

VIII.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy glorious Resurrection . . . Good Lord, deliver us."

THE one "Sign" to which our Lord Jesus Christ appealed in substantiation of His own tremendous claims was that of His coming Resurrection. "Destroy this Temple," He said to the hostile Jews at the outset of His Ministry, "and in three days I will raise it up."* And "He spake," as St. John is careful to remind us, "of the Temple of His Body."† "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," He said to "certain of the scribes and Pharisees"; "and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."‡ That "Sign," in due course, was given. On the third day after He was put to death upon the Cross, our Blessed Saviour rose again from the dead. And the evidence that He did so is sufficiently full and complete to make His Resurrection, in the words

* St. John ii. 19. † St. John ii. 21. ‡ St. Matt. xii. 39, 40.

of a modern writer, "one of the best-attested facts in history."

The eleven remaining apostles saw Him again and again after He rose. They not only saw Him, but listened to His teaching. "He appeared unto them by the space of forty days, speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God."* They were even permitted to touch Him, to handle Him, to examine the marks of the nails in His Hands and His Feet, and the print of the spear in His Side. Other people saw Him also. The Holy Women saw Him. Cleopas and an unnamed fellow-disciple saw Him. St. James saw Him. On one occasion—probably in Galilee —"He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once,"† more than half of whom were still living, and ready to testify to what they had seen, when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians some thirty years later. And not one of these many witnesses had the smallest doubt of His identity, or of the reality of His Presence in His risen Body. Even St. Thomas, who demanded more than ocular proof, was convinced, and broke out with the grand confession—transcending even that of St. Peter on a prior occasion—"My Lord and my God."‡

It is important, too, to notice that none of these witnesses had expected their Master to rise. Some of them had been told, more than once, that He would do so; but they had never under-

* Acts i. 3. † 1 Cor. xv. 6. ‡ St. John xx. 28.

stood. They had only "questioned among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean."* When He was arrested, their hearts failed them. When He was put to death, they were plunged into the deepest gloom. No ray of comfort or of light broke into that terrible spiritual darkness. On the Resurrection morning, it is true, the Holy Women went to the Sepulchre. But it was not that they might see whether the buried Lord had risen; it was only that they might complete the last sad office of embalming His sacred Body. When they reached the Tomb, and found the stone rolled away from the entrance and the Body gone, no thought of a Resurrection crossed their minds. They merely imagined that the Sepulchre had been rifled of its contents. Even St. Mary Magdalene, when the risen Saviour appeared to her, mistook Him for the gardener, and asked Him, if he had removed the Body, to tell her where It had been laid, in order that she might take It away. When St. Peter and St. John, on hearing the women's tale, hurried to the Tomb, and saw the strange spectacle within it, they apparently realized something of the great truth, and hastened back to tell the rest. But their fellow-apostles refused to believe them.† When the two disciples from Emmaus came bursting breathlessly in with their tale of the mysterious Stranger Who had walked with them, and talked with them, and had made

* St. Mark ix. 10. † St. Luke xxiv. 11.

Himself known to them at last in the breaking of the bread, they were still sceptical. "Neither believed they them."* Not one among them all had expected the Resurrection. They had looked only for an earthly Messiah reigning upon an earthly throne, with themselves on twelve lesser thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the arrest and execution of their Master had blighted all these hopes, and wakened them from that dazzling dream. "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel."† And when at last He appeared to the Ten in the Upper Room, and they saw Him for themselves, standing amongst them once again as Man among men, still there was no idea of a Resurrection in their minds. They regarded Him as an apparition. "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit."‡ And it was only after a demonstration of the reality of His Body, His showing to them of the marks of His Passion, His taking a piece of a broiled fish and eating it before them, that at last they were enabled to grasp the mighty fact that their Master, in deed and in truth, had risen from the dead.

When conviction came to them, however, it was absolute, and it was final. They never doubted again. All through their ministerial career they placed the Resurrection in the very forefront of their teaching. Everywhere they proclaimed it, with the calm certainty of men who knew that

* St. Mark xvi. 13. † St. Luke xxiv. 21. ‡ St. Luke xxiv. 37.

they were stating a fact. And they willingly faced persecution, torture, death itself, rather than remain silent.

But this is not all. The fact of the Resurrection does not depend only upon the evidence of personal witnesses. We have two other testimonies of a different character, but of overwhelming force.

The first is that of the substitution of the Christian Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath.

Out of all the Commandments which were given to Moses, there was none which the Jews kept with greater strictness than the Fourth. They regarded the Sabbath Day with almost superstitious reverence. They enforced its observance with fanatical zeal. They fenced it round with a multitude of stringent rules and ordinances, the infringement of the least of which was treated as the gravest of crimes. The first great cause which led to the persecution of the Saviour was His choice of the sacred day for the performance of some of His acts of mercy.* The plucking of ears of corn by His hungry disciples was denounced as a sin.† Even the process of embalming His sacred Body had to be suspended when the Sabbath drew on.‡ Yet, in the face of all this, we have the astounding fact that a number of men, every one of whom was a Jew to his heart's core, steeped from earliest

* St. Matt. xii. 9, etc. † St. Matt. xii. 1, etc.
‡ St. Luke xxiii. 56.

infancy in the traditions of his race, gave up the observance of the Sabbath; set the Law at defiance; ignored the regulation of the Fourth Commandment; and deliberately kept the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh! This extraordinary fact has to be accounted for. What explanation of it can possibly be given except that which Christianity has always put forward—that on the first day of the week Christ rose again from the dead, and that the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath was made (in all probability by the explicit order of the Saviour Himself), to commemorate for ever that greatest of all events in the world's long history?

But we have another testimony to that wonderful event as well. We have the further fact that the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, from the very first, has been regarded as the principal act of worship by Christian people. And this would have been utterly impossible if Jesus Christ had never risen from the dead. The Sacrament was instituted, without a doubt, as a memorial, not of His Resurrection, but of His Death. "This is My Body, Which is given for you; this is My Blood which is poured out for you."* "As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink the Cup, ye proclaim the Lord's Death till He come."† But if the Resurrection had never taken place, is it likely, is it even possible, that the Sacrament would ever have been cele-

* St. Luke xxii. 19, 20. † 1 Cor. xi. 26.

brated at all? The Saviour's Death, if it had never been followed by His return from the dead, would have been the utter refutation of His claims. It would have branded Him with undying infamy as the greatest impostor that the world had ever seen. The contention of the Jews that He had blasphemed by making Himself out to be the Son of God would have been fully justified. And as often as the apostles celebrated the Divine Mysteries they would have proclaimed the fact that they had been befooled; that all their wild and extravagant expectations had been blighted; that the Master Whom they had hoped to set on Israel's Throne had died a felon's death, and had ignominiously failed to make good those splendid promises by which they had been dazzled and blinded. Men do not publish abroad their own shame like that. They do not invite the world again and again to gloat over the spectacle of their discomfiture. Most certainly, if the Resurrection had never taken place, the Holy Eucharist would never have been celebrated by the apostles. And the fact that from the very earliest days of the Christian Church it was so celebrated, that on the first day of each week the apostles and their converts regularly met together to obey the Lord's command, and that the mark of allegiance to them was shown, not only in the acceptance of their "teaching and fellowship," but also in the "breaking of bread"; this, again is a

testimony of extraordinary strength to the historical fact of Christ's Resurrection. Those who doubt, or deny, that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, after His Death and Burial, rose again from the dead must find some explanation of the place which the Sacrament of the Holy Communion holds, and always has held, in Christian observance.

Granting the fact of the Resurrection, however, there are four common ideas with regard to its character which must be rejected if its true significance is to be grasped.

I. The first of these is the notion that, when our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He returned to the ordinary conditions of human existence, living among men as before, and subject still to the limitations of time, space, and matter.

The conception which men usually form of the Resurrection is probably somewhat to this effect—that at a certain moment the Saviour's Soul returned into His Body; that the grave-cloths were thrown off by Him, or perhaps removed by angelic attendants; that He rose from His resting-place; that the stone which closed the door of the Tomb was rolled away in order to allow Him to leave it; and that He thereupon passed out through the entrance, back into the world which He had left, to resume the mode of existence which death, for a brief space, had interrupted. Verestchagin's famous picture, for

instance—commended by the painter himself as depicting the Resurrection as it actually happened—represents the four Roman soldiers flying in terror, as the Saviour comes creeping out through the low doorway of the Sepulchre which they had been guarding.

The real facts of the case, however, are very different indeed. Verestchagin's picture is utterly and hopelessly incorrect. Every other picture of the Resurrection is utterly and hopelessly incorrect also. No human artist ever did, or ever will, depict the scene as it actually was, for the simple reason that there was nothing to depict. Dr. Latham, in his "Risen Master," has shown us that the real witness to the Resurrection, which filled both St. Peter and St. John with such unspeakable awe, lay, not in the Empty Tomb, but in the testimony of the grave-cloths." There they lay on the rocky ledge, just as before—the head-cloth still twisted turban-wise "in a place by itself," the body-bandages still wrapped round and round with the spices lying undisturbed between them—undisturbed, but flat, because the Sacred Body had been withdrawn from between them. They had not been unfolded or slipped off, in order that the Body might rise and leave the Sepulchre. There was no need for that. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," the Soul had come back into the Body; and in that same moment the Body had passed into another plane of being.

Though It was the same Body that had hung upon the Cross, and had been pierced by the soldier's spear, and had been laid to rest in Joseph's tomb, yet It was a spiritual Body now, not a material Body, and had passed out of the sphere of human sight, and beyond the range of physical limitations. Neither the grave-cloths nor the rocky walls of the Tomb confined It any longer. It passed, so to speak, through them, not that It might visit some other spot on earth, but in virtue of Its translation into the world of spirit. Mortality was swallowed up in Life. So that an artist, wishing to depict the Resurrection, has nothing to draw. If human witnesses had been looking on inside the Sepulchre, at the very moment when it took place, there would have been nothing for them to see, except that suddenly the Body would have vanished from within Its wrappings, and the grave-cloths themselves, losing Its support, would slowly have fallen flat.

That was the Resurrection.

And afterwards we find that the mode of the Saviour's Life has wholly changed. He is not constantly with the apostles. He does not come and go with them as before. He appears, suddenly and mysteriously, among His followers, even when the doors of the room in which they are sitting are bolted and barred "for fear of the Jews."* When His interview with the two

* St. John xx. 19.

disciples on the road to Emmaus is over, He "vanishes out of their sight; or rather, to translate the Greek phrase literally, He "becomes unseen."* Sometimes He appears in a different form, and for some little time remains unrecognized. St. Mary Magdalene mistakes Him for the gardener, Cleopas and his companion take Him for a passing stranger. And His disciples never ask Him now "Master, where dwellest Thou?" They know that He is no longer a dweller upon earth. They never enquire of one another now, "Hath any man brought Him aught to eat?" They know that, even though He has eaten before them to prove that He is not a spirit, He is no longer dependent upon physical sustenance. He dwells in the spiritual sphere, because He is clothed with a spiritual Body. And all His appearances now are manifestations from that sphere, transient visits from the unseen back into the seen, from which His Body has been withdrawn by the very fact of His Resurrection.

This gives us the answer to those who ask how the Risen Christ could remain on earth for forty days without being seen except by those privileged few who were "witnesses chosen before of God." He was not "on earth" during those forty days. All the conditions of His Human Life were changed. The Resurrection translated Him at once to the spiritual plane.

* St. Luke xxiv. 31.

And He could be seen only by those to whom He chose to appear, and whose eyes were opened so that they might behold Him.

II. Another idea with regard to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ of which we have to rid ourselves is, that it was parallel with those other miracles of resurrection of which we read both in the Old and the New Testaments. Men and women who had died were brought back from the dead by Elijah, by Elisha, by our Saviour Himself three times over, by St. Peter, and by St. Paul; and there is also the record of a dead man being restored to life by coming into contact, in his tomb, with Elisha's bones. But these were all totally different from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was not only that those who were raised were recalled to life by the agency of another, while He by His own power and will took again the Life which He had voluntarily laid down. It was also that while He became free by His Resurrection from the dominion of death, they did not. The widow's son at Zarephath, the Shunammite's child, Jairus' daughter, the unnamed son of the unnamed widow of Nain, Lazarus, Tabitha, Eutychus—they all had to die again. Their bodies were physical bodies as before, dependent upon physical nutriment, subject to physical weakness, dissolution, and decay. "Resurrection," to them, was only the granting of a short spell more of earthly existence, which death, at last, must end.

We are even told, with regard to Lazarus, that only a few days after his return from the dead the chief priests plotted to put him again to death.* The conditions of his life, obviously, were exactly what they had been before. But with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ it was not so. His Death upon the Cross was the only death that He had to die. His Resurrection, with the translation of His Body into the spiritual sphere which it involved, placed Him for ever outside death's power. "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died unto sin once; but the Life that He liveth, He liveth unto God."† The various miracles of restoration to life were symbolic, prophetic, of the resurrection which awaits us all. But they were not instances of it. The only true Resurrection which has ever yet taken place is that of Jesus Christ.

III. Once more, we have to bear in mind the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead as God. He rose as Man.

It is true that in virtue of the perfect union in His own Person of the two Natures, the Human and the Divine, it is permissible to speak of "the Resurrection of the Son of God." But still the fact remains that in His Divine Nature the Saviour could not die. He died as Man. His Death, in every respect save that it was

* St. John xii. 10. † Rom. vi. 9, 10.

absolutely and entirely voluntary, was a human death. And His Resurrection, consequently, was a human Resurrection. But for this fact, His return from the dead would be bereft of more than half its meaning. It would signify little to us that the Son of God could not be "holden" by death. We should take that for granted; and it would have no bearing upon the question of our own immortality. But the fact that death has been compelled to give up a human prey signifies a very great deal. It shows that, as far as mankind is concerned, the grave wins no final and irreversible victory; that soul and body can be brought together again; that there is not only a "natural," or physical body, but a spiritual body as well; and that though the one is to be replaced by the other, there is a real principle of identity and continuity between the two. Christ's Resurrection was man's resurrection, just as truly as His death was man's death.

IV. But there is still another common idea with regard to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which we must lay aside, if we are to grasp the full significance of that tremendous Fact. We must rid ourselves altogether of the notion that it was the resurrection of a single individual man.

We must not speak, or think, for example, of our Saviour's return from the dead as merely an "instance" of the resurrection to which we are all taught to look forward: as though one

human being had already undergone an experience which at some future time will be universal. Even that would mean a great deal. It would show that death does not entail the final separation of one part of man's threefold nature from the other two. It would show that when the soul is sundered from the body, it does not become for ever "weak," like the inhabitants of Hades in the vision of Isaiah.* It would give us good ground for believing that resurrection from the dead is the common destiny of man. Many men and women crave for the coming-back of even one soul from "that bourne from which no traveller returns" to convince them of the lesser fact of immortality. If Christ had been that one human being, it would, perhaps, have satisfied the longing: though there are many who would not be convinced even if One rose from the dead.

But the Resurrection of Jesus Christ does a very great deal more than this. It tells us, not merely that all mankind will rise from the dead, but that they have already so risen in Him. His was the Resurrection, not of a solitary, individual human being, but of all mankind as summarized in its Representative Head. The victory which sinful humanity could not win over death, to which its sin had brought it into bondage, has been won by sinless Humanity in the Person of Christ Jesus, Who rose, as He

* Isaiah xiv. 10.

had lived and died, not as "a man," but as "Man"; as the "Second Adam"; as the Epitome of the whole human race. It is the absolute assurance, not that One over Whom death had no real and lasting power has overcome it, but that those over whom it had power have been set free from it. No single human soul is without part and share in the Humanity of Jesus Christ; and therefore no single human soul is outside, not merely the benefits of His Resurrection, but the actual Resurrection itself.

St. Paul brings out this great truth very clearly. "Our old man was crucified with Him," he tells the Christians at Rome, "that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the Death that He died, He died unto sin once; but the Life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."* To the Galatians he writes:—"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."† And he urges the Colossians, since they were "raised together with Christ," to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right

* Rom. vi. 6, etc. † Gal. ii. 20.

hand of God."* "Ye died," is his final reminder to them, "and your life is hid with Christ in God."†

What more forcible assurance could we have that, in the apostle's view, our Blessed Lord did not die and rise again merely in His own Personal Human Individuality, but that the entire race of mankind, in a most real sense, is involved in His Death and Resurrection?

And this is his great argument in that wonderful fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. "If Christ be preached that He hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain."‡ We notice that St. Paul does not say, "If Christ has not risen, then there is no resurrection of the dead." It would be quite true to say that; but what he does say is something very much stronger. He says, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen." He can afford to say it, for he knows that the Resurrection is a fact. He has just been summarizing the indisputable evidence for it. He also knows that in the Humanity in which Christ rose all those who were under the dominion of death are represented. They all rose in Him. And in even stronger

* Col. iii. 1. † Col. iii. 3. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 12, etc.

language still he goes on to say, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."*

The importance of this great truth is obvious. If the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ had been that of an individual human being, the circumstances attending it would have been so exceptional that it could scarcely have been regarded as a pledge of our own. For, in the first place, we must have recognized the fact that He who died and rose again was not an ordinary man, but the Incarnate Son of God; and, in the second place, we must have admitted that He was without that taint of sin with which all the other members of the race are infected, and which brings subjection to death's power as its inevitable consequence. There would have been no parallel between His case and ours. Both His Divine Nature and His human record would have placed Him on a plane of His own. We should have found ourselves confronted with the dilemma that we could regard Him as "the firstfruits of them that are asleep" only by denying His Divinity, of which, at the same time, His Resurrection is the undeniable proof. But when we realize that Jesus Christ was *not* an individual human being; that the

* 1 Cor. xv. 20, etc.

Humanity which He took upon Himself at His Incarnation was so fully comprehensive that it brought into union with His own Person the entire race which He came on earth to redeem; that He represents us all in a manner of which all other forms of human representation are but symbols and types: then we realize also that the resurrection of our race from the dead is not a future possibility, to which we may all look forward, but an already accomplished fact; that "in Him," to use St. Paul's favourite expression, though not in any other sense, that resurrection is "past already." Just as certainly as we died "in Him," so "in Him" we rose from the dead. And just as surely as His Death redeemed us all from the bondage of death, by depriving it of its "sting," so His return from the dead is the pledge of our own resurrection.

"O wisest love, that flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe—
Should strive, and should prevail."

IX.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ.

"By Thy glorious . . . Ascension, Good Lord, deliver us."

One of the most remarkable passages in the four Gospels is that in which St. Luke tells us that the apostles, after witnessing the Saviour's Ascension into heaven, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy," and that for ten days subsequently they "were continually in the Temple, blessing God."*

It is in marked and striking contrast with their behaviour of six weeks previously. Then, when they imagined that they had lost their Master for ever, they were plunged into the profoundest gloom. They gave themselves up to hopeless misery. And there were four distinct elements in the despairing sorrow which overwhelmed them. There was, first of all, the realization of their unspeakable loss. Never again, they thought, would they look upon the Face of Him Whom for three long years they had loved and

* St. Luke xxiv. 52, 53.

followed. There was, next, the sense of their own personal danger. They hid themselves behind barred and bolted doors, "for fear of the Jews." Thirdly, there was the conviction that their nation had lost its one chance of deliverance from the hated power of the Romans. "We hoped that it was He Which should redeem Israel."* And, once more, there was the blighting and blasting of their own anticipated career as the lieutenants in His campaign, and the participators in His final triumph. The twelve thrones on which they had hoped to sit would never now be occupied.

Of course we should not have expected the apostles to feel, as they witnessed the Ascension, the same sense of utter and irretrievable disaster which had resulted from the Crucifixion. To see their Master rising from the earth and disappearing in a Cloud of Glory was a very different thing from seeing Him nailed upon a cross to die. His Resurrection had taught them Who He really was. The instruction which they had received from Him during the Great Forty Days had thrown a flood of light upon the true nature of the mysterious "kingdom" of which they had heard so much, and upon their own position with regard to it. But it would have seemed natural, and inevitable, that they should view the Saviour's Departure into heaven with very mingled feelings. They knew, now, that as

* St. Luke xxiv. 21.

long as earthly life should last they would never see His Face again. Their own danger was not at an end, for He had warned them that persecutions and death awaited them. And they had to take up, unassisted and alone, the heaviest task that has ever been laid upon men—that of proclaiming a religion which was to supplant all others, and to demand universal allegiance to One Who had lived the life of a humble carpenter, and had died the death of a convicted felon. Yet they did not sorrow at all. They were conscious of no mingled feelings as they walked back to Jerusalem after gazing upon the scene at Bethany. The one paramount emotion that filled their breasts was that of exultation and rejoicing.

Clearly then, the apostles regarded their Master's return into heaven as something much more than the mere natural and necessary sequel to His earthly career. And the circumstances which surrounded it must have taught them this lesson. If His Ascension had had no meaning or power of its own, He might have left the world unnoticed as when He came. He might simply have passed back, finally, into the spiritual sphere as He did after each of the Appearances to His followers during the Forty Days. For each disappearance into the unseen world was virtually an Ascension. But He did far more than this. He took a formal farewell of His followers. He gathered them together

as the representatives of His Church. He gave them a solemn parting Charge. He lifted up His Hands in benediction upon them and upon all their future work. And then, instead of merely becoming invisible, as He had done so often before, He manifestly rose up into heaven, while angelic messengers spoke both of His Destination and of His ultimate Return. This fact alone was sufficient to show them that His Departure from earth was something more than the natural and necessary return to His Glory.

It was requisite, of course, that the apostles should be convinced that they would see their Master, in this life, no more. For forty days He had visited them from time to time, always coming out of, and returning into, the Unseen. He had continued and completed the course of instruction which had been the main object of His Three Years' Ministry. And He had taught them to realize that, although they could not always see Him, yet He might at any moment be visibly with them, and was never far away. Now something more than this was needed. They had to understand that their training was over, and that henceforth He would be with them in visible Presence no more. They had to enter upon the tremendous task for which they had been chosen and ordained, "clothed with power from on high,"* no doubt, and encouraged by the promise of spiritual guidance, but yet with

* St. Luke xxiv. 49.

the sense that, humanly speaking, all now depended upon themselves. Without a formal Ascension they would never have felt this. They would always have been expecting their Master to return. They would constantly have suspended decisions, and deferred action, in order that they might lay their difficulties before Him. But the conviction that they were now His commissioned agents and representatives upon earth was impressed upon them, not only by His solemn Charge, but also by the knowledge that His Departure from among them, this time, was final.

Taken alone, however, such a conviction would scarcely account for their "joy." Thankfulness, even pride, that they should have been deemed worthy to be entrusted with so momentous a task they might have felt. Knowing something of the supernatural power which was to come upon them, they might have been filled with strong determination, and animated with buoyant hope. But something more than this must have been in their minds to produce that exuberant rejoicing with which their hearts were overflowing as they wended their way back to Jerusalem. And we can partly understand it, perhaps, by remembering that the Saviour did not return to heaven as He left it.

He left it as God. From everlasting He had reigned in it as God, One with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in all the fulness of Deity. But

He returned to it as God and Man together. The Humanity which He had taken upon Himself at His Incarnation was not to be a mere temporary possession, assumed in order that He might offer Himself as a Sacrifice, and parted with as soon as the Offering had been made. It was to be united for ever with His Divinity. Even the Body which He wore, glorified, indeed, but still most truly Human, was to clothe Him for all eternity. So it was with His Human Soul. So it was with His Human Spirit. He left no element of His Humanity behind Him when He departed from earth. In all its completeness He took it with Him into heaven. By the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost, through the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation had bound up God and Man, in the Person of Jesus Christ, wholly, completely, and for ever. And although "He that descended is the Same also that ascended far above all the heavens,"* still between His Descent and His Return there was that mighty difference. God alone came down from Heaven: God and Man, united in One, went back.

This alone would be matter for the greatest rejoicing. Regarded from this point of view alone, our Lord's Ascension was the exaltation and triumph of Humanity. At the centre of all things a human Heart and Mind and Will are for ever enthroned. In the very counsels of

* Ephes. iv. 10.

Deity Humanity is represented. And we have, not only as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but as the future Judge of all men, not a remote and inaccessible God, knowing nothing by experience of human temptation and human weakness, Who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," but One possessing our own nature, Who has Himself been "in all points tempted like as we are,"* and Who knows our necessities because He has personally felt them. "Authority to execute judgment has been given to Him," not because He is the Son of God, but "because He is the Son of Man."†

But even this great truth did not exhaust the significance of the Ascension. There must have been other elements in the rejoicing of the apostles as well. They must also have felt that their Redeeming Master had gone back into heaven to offer His own Sacrifice of Himself before the Throne of God.

We are too apt to think and speak of the Sacrifice of the Death of Jesus Christ, with the Offering of His Blood for the sins of the whole world, as if it had been consummated and completed at the moment when He breathed out His Spirit on Mount Calvary. But it was not. That Sacrifice, all-sufficient though it was, still had to be presented and pleaded before God's Throne. The sin of man demanded something more than a penalty, however great, to be paid

* Heb. iv. 15. † St. John v. 27.

either by himself or by his Representative. It demanded the satisfaction of the Divine Justice. In other words, any sacrifice that was made in order to discharge the debt had to be offered to God, and to be accepted by Him, before it could become effective. Mankind, during the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, was in the position of a debtor whose liabilities had been paid into court, but had not as yet been handed over to the creditor. And God was the Creditor. The ransom was due to Him, not, as some of the early Christian writers thought, to the devil. So, in the wonderful typology of the great Day of Atonement, the high priest, as representing the people, did not merely take the sacrificial lamb and shed its blood as a propitiation for their sins. After he had shed the blood he had still to take it, and go away from the people with it, and carry it behind the Veil into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle it there before the Mercy Seat on which the Cloud of Glory rested. He went, that is—still as representing the people—into the Very Presence Chamber of the Most High, and there presented and pleaded the blood of the victim which He had slain. And in doing this he typified Jesus Christ, "Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest," Who has not only poured out His own Blood upon the Cross as the one all-perfect and all-sufficient Sacrifice for human sin, but "through" that Blood "entered in

once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption."* "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleansing our consciences from dead works to serve the Living God."† And the sacred writer goes on to remind us that "it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these"—*i.e.* with the blood of the lambs and goats which were offered year by year continually—"but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered, not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the Face of God for us."‡

The Cross of Jesus Christ was not an isolated, self-contained Act of Redemption. It was closely bound up both with what preceded it and what came after it. On the one hand, it depended, to a very great extent, upon the Representative Human Life of perfect obedience to the Divine Will which the Saviour had lived for three and thirty years of earthly time. And, on the other hand, it had to be followed by the presentation and pleading of the Sacrifice before God's Throne in heaven. Without that, although it had been offered, it would not have become effective. And Jesus Christ, at His Ascension, passed into heaven in order to present and plead it.

That is what we mean when we speak of our

* Heb. ix. 12. † Heb. ix. 14. ‡ Heb. ix. 23, 24.

Blessed Lord as our "Mediator and Advocate." A mediator is one who comes between two parties who are at variance, and tries to bring them together. An advocate is one who pleads on behalf of a wrong-doer before a judge. The idea in each case is that of one who is in touch with both parties, and therefore has special facilities for bringing about a settlement. And our Blessed Lord combines the functions of Mediator and Advocate in His own Person, simply because in Him the Godhead is still united with Manhood. If it were not so, He could not occupy that two-fold Office. For One Person of the Holy Trinity to plead or intercede, as God, with the other Two would imply a division in the Divine Counsels. The very idea of the Unity would be destroyed. But the Incarnation, as extended into the Divine Life in heaven, introduces a new factor into the situation. It enables Him, Who, being God, became Man, and Who, as Man, offered Himself as a Sacrifice for human sin, to plead the merits of that Sacrifice by His own Presence in heaven in His Manhood. The ascended Saviour, still human, is a Living Witness to the fact that the price of sin has been paid. He is "the One Mediator between God and men" because He is Himself both God and Man, "the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all."* And He is also the One "Advocate with the Father" because He Himself is "the propitia-

* 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

tion for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world."* He "hath His Priesthood unchangeable," and "is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."†

In this connection, the argument of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is also worthy of notice. For the writer tells us that the Eternal Priesthood of our Blessed Lord was not bestowed upon Him in its fulness until His Resurrection Day. "Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that spake unto Him,

"Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee : as He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek. Who in the days of His Flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered ; and, having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation; named of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."‡

The idea of this passage clearly is, that the Office of Mediator and Advocate was not, and could not be, fully bestowed upon the Saviour

* 1 John ii. 2. † Heb. vii. 24, 25. ‡ Heb. v. 5, etc.

until He had risen from the dead with a Human Body which He could carry back, together with the fulness of Humanity, into heaven. Until then He had nothing to "offer." For it is the Presence of that Body in heaven, glorified now, but still bearing the Marks of His Passion, that constitutes His unceasing Intercession: just as it is the spiritual Presence of that same Body, given to us in sacramental reality through the outward symbols of bread and wine, which enables us to plead the One Great Sacrifice as often as we celebrate the Eucharist.

> "His Manhood pleads where now it lives
> On heaven's eternal Throne,
> And where in mystic rite He gives
> Its Presence to His own."

Was there something more even than all this in the minds of the apostles as they watched their Master rising up into the Cloud of Glory? Was there still another element in the "great joy" which they felt as they slowly returned to Jerusalem? Did they realize that the Passage of the Risen Saviour back to the world from which He came was something very much more than the Exaltation of an individual Human Being, even though in absolute union with the Divine? In other words, did they understand that this was, not "a man," but "Man," ascending into heaven?

We cannot tell. Before His Death there were

"many things" which the Saviour had to say to His disciples, but which He refrained from saying, because as yet they were "not able to bear them."* It may have been so after his Resurrection as well. Much, no doubt, that had been very misty and dark was made clear to them during the Great Forty Days, as the Risen Master "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself,"† and spoke to them of "the things concerning the Kingdom of God."‡ But this final time of training was not a very long one, and during it the Saviour was not continuously with His disciples. In one case, at least, a week elapsed between His Appearances to them. It scarcely seems possible that He should have traversed the whole wide field of Christian doctrine in the course of those few brief interviews. Further, the Gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles—or rather to the Church as represented by them—in order that He might "guide them into all the truth." This implies, at least, that after their Master had gone back into heaven, further and fuller understanding would be vouchsafed to them of those great and eternal truths which they were to proclaim to the world. And we find that in the Epistles—more especially in those of St. Paul—doctrines are brought out, emphasized, and expanded, of which we find little or no trace in the Gospels. Inspiration

* St. John xvi. 12. † St. Luke xxiv. 27. ‡ Acts i. 3.

took time to do its perfect work. Meditation on the Life, and Teaching, and Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, opened the eyes of the sacred writers to much that at first they did not comprehend. So it is quite possible that as the apostles gazed up into heaven on the Day of the Ascension, and saw their Master disappearing into the cloud of Glory, they did not realize that this was the Exaltation of all humanity, as summed up and represented in Him. The first comprehension of that wonderful truth may well have been reserved for St. Paul, in whose writings even the leader of the apostles found things that were "hard to be understood,"* and whose privilege it was to set forth the Saviour as the "Last Adam," in Whom, as Man, the entire race of humanity is summarized.

But, whether the apostles understood it or not, it is quite impossible to arrive at any understanding of the Scheme of Redemption without it. And the connection of that wonderful doctrine with the Saviour's Ascension is plainly stated by the Apostle to the Gentiles. Just as he associates ourselves, as members of the human race, with Christ's Crucifixion, and Death, and Burial, and Resurrection, so he does also with His Return into heaven. He regards all mankind as having already ascended in Him, and as reigning with Him now on the Throne of His

* 2 Peter iii. 16.

Glory. God has not only "raised us up with Him," he tells the Ephesians, in that profound Epistle throughout which the union of humanity with the Incarnate Son is the great leading idea, but has "made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* Heaven is not simply to be thrown open at some future time to men; it is occupied by Man now, in the person of the Federal Head of our race. And he also reminds the Colossians that, since they were "raised together with Christ," they must "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God:"† that they "died" in Him, and that therefore their life is "hid with Christ in God."‡

So the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ is all-important, not because it was His own Personal return to the glory which He had laid aside and the Throne which He had vacated, not even because it was the prediction and the pledge that we ourselves may find the consummation of all the happiness that is possible to our human nature in the heaven where He is, but because it is the triumphant climax of His Redemptive Work. He "led captivity captive," not merely out of Hades, but into heaven. His Resurrection was the bursting of Humanity out of the bonds of death: His Ascension was its admission into Life Eternal. He has not only gone to "prepare a place" for us, in the "many

* Ephes. ii. 6. † Col. iii. 1. ‡ Col. iii. 3.

mansions" of His Father's House: "* we already occupy that place "in Him." In the Person of our Representative Head our human destiny is achieved.

Before we pass away from this great subject one final word may not be out of place.

Even to those in whom faith is strongest, who believe most fully and most firmly that God has made us for Himself, and that our hearts must be for ever restless until they rest in Him, who cannot be contented with any view of man's ultimate destiny which falls short of Eternity passed in the Visible Presence of God, amid all the worship and all the work of the angels which surround His Throne—even to them, sometimes, the Divine promises must seem too great and too good to be true. Knowing something of themselves, realizing something of their sin, feeling something of the hold that it has upon them, understanding something of the gulf which it has opened between their souls and God, it seems impossible to them that they can ever be fitted for heaven; that that awful chasm can ever be closed; that not sin alone but the results of sin, even the very sense of sin, can be so taken away, and blotted out, and lost, that they can not only bear, but rejoice in the dazzling, blinding light that streams from the Great White Throne. "I do not want merely

* St. John xiv. 2.

to be forgiven," said one who had greatly sinned, and deeply repented. "I want to forget."

Perfect happiness has been defined as "perfect correspondence with surroundings." Can perfect correspondence with the surroundings of heaven be possible even to the holiest of men? Can it ever be possible to themselves, who are only too sadly conscious that there are heights of holiness, open to men, which they have never succeeded in reaching? With sin gripping them still and holding them down, dulling their spiritual capacities, blunting their spiritual faculties, ingrained, as it seems to them, in their very nature, and resisting all their efforts to root it out—is it possible, is it even conceivable, that they should ever in any true sense of the words become "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light"? They do not limit the scope of the Redemption that the Death of Christ has won. They do not restrict the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. But, being what they are, they sadly wonder whether it is possible for them ever to become what they are told that they may be—companions of Jesus Christ in heaven, sharers in the very Joy of the Lord.

Now there is an answer to that sad questioning in the Fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, Man as well as God, and not only Man but Representative Man, has ascended into Heaven. Humanity, summed up in Him, is already bathed in that glorious Light. It is already in perfect

correspondence with its surroundings. The "Joy of the Lord" is the Joy with which the Human Heart of Jesus Christ, as mankind's Summary, is filled in heaven now. The bliss of heaven is His, not only as God, but also as Man. "For the Joy that was set before Him"—in His Human capacity—"He endured the Cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God."* The happiness which is offered to us is achieved already in Him. It is achieved in Him as representing us all. And it can be reached by any one of ourselves "through Him," if we "run with patience the race that is set before us," because He is "the Author and Perfecter of our faith."† This is no glorious but delusive picture, held up before us only to mock us. It is no bright and magnificent mirage which must fade away into nothingness as soon as we try to approach it. It is but the plain statement of "the things which God has prepared for them that love Him,"‡ and of which He has even now given us the earnest "through the Spirit."§

"The Son of God," it has been said, "became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the sons of God." We have the pledge of it in His Ascension into Heaven. And all through the endless æons of eternity we may rejoice in God's

* Heb. xii. 2. † Heb. xii. 1, 2. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9.
§ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

Presence, ever drawing nearer to Him, ever learning more of Him, ever gazing farther and farther down into the unfathomable depths of His Love. It transforms earth now, and it may glorify heaven hereafter, more and more and more, *because* we may share more and more in the Perfect Humanity of Him Who has already achieved man's wondrous Destiny, not for Himself alone, but for us whom He has bound up with Himself—our Incarnate, Crucified, Risen, and Ascended Lord.

"May the Lord give us clean hands and pure hearts, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, that we may enter in on the Great Day, and be for ever with Him."

X.

The Mission of the Holy Ghost.

"By the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us."

We have now seen that in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore in His earthly Life, His endurance of Temptation, His Sufferings, His Death, His sojourn in Hades, His Resurrection, and His Ascension into heaven, every individual member of the human race is represented. The Second Adam has lived the life of absolute obedience to the Divine Will in which the first Adam failed; and by so doing He has fulfilled the original obligation of humanity. By His Sacrifice of Himself, freely and voluntarily offered, He has made an Atonement which covers the whole scope of the transgression, not only of the first Adam, but of all his descendants; and by so doing, He has taken away from the race the curse which rested upon it. And—still as representing both His predecessor in the Headship of humanity together with all who sprang from his loins—He has broken loose from

the bonds of death, and has entered into that life of glory for which our race, after passing through its preliminary probation, was intended and created. He was enabled to do this because, being God, He became Man. His Manhood rendered His earthly Life and Death possible. His Deity gave to them their atoning value.

It is indeed a great and magnificent truth. It throws a ray of bright light on the deep mystery of the Atonement. It does away with that miserable doctrine of Substitution, which has been a cause of offence to so many thoughtful minds. It reveals to us, as operating in the Divine sphere, the very same principle which is admitted in our human system of justice. It helps us to understand that the Redeemer of mankind, in His Cross and Passion, was not being "punished" for sins of which He was not Personally guilty. And it gives to us our own part and share in the satisfaction for those transgressions which we ourselves have committed. Representative man sinned, and involved the whole race in his downfall. Representative Man atoned, and embraced the whole race in His Redemption.

Taken by itself, however, even this mighty Fact is not sufficient. For in one most important respect the two cases are not parallel. That we are descended from the first Adam is obvious enough; and it is equally plain that we inherit his sinful nature. But where is our personal

connection with the Second Adam? Such a connection is clearly necessary if we are to benefit by His Redemptive Work; and the doctrine of our Lord's Comprehensive Humanity, while it throws light upon the nature of His Atonement, seems to possess the fatal flaw of leaving that Humanity enshrined in Him alone. Our own humanity is not changed by it through the fact of Redemption. We have been taken up into it; we are represented in it; but yet it is external to ourselves. For we are not descended from the Second Adam as we are from the first. And there would be but little practical result to ourselves in the fact that the Federal Head of our Race had overcome sin and death, and had triumphantly passed to His Reward, if He were to remain for ever separate from us who are sinners, without imparting to us His own pure and spotless Human Nature. In that case we should be able, no doubt, to contemplate, as fulfilled in Him, the grand destiny which God had intended for humanity. But we ourselves, as human individuals, should be wholly incapable of attaining to it.

For we know only too well that, even though the penalty of sin has been paid, sin itself is in us still. The Cross has atoned for it; but it has not taken it away. We know, also, that no soul which is stained with that foul infection can bear to enter into the Visible Presence of Him Who is "of purer eyes than to behold

evil."* Jesus Christ may have gone to "prepare a place for us;"† but, so long as we are what we are, we cannot occupy it. And though the doctrine of Christ's Representative Humanity may help us to understand something of the manner in which the penalty of sin has been paid, it fails altogether, apparently, to show us how we ourselves may enter heaven.

In reality, however, this wonderful doctrine covers a wider ground than even that of the Atonement. We have been thinking, so far, only of the first part of the work which Christ undertook for the sons of men. We have been thinking, not of salvation, but merely of Redemption. The two terms are often regarded as interchangeable. Sometimes we speak of Jesus Christ as our "Redeemer," and sometimes we speak of Him as our "Saviour;" and we are apt to assume that these are but two alternative titles for the one great relation which He bears to our race. But they are not. Redemption and Salvation are not coextensive. The one is merely the first part of the other. The work which has been done *for* man requires to be supplemented by another work done *in* man. In order to bring about Salvation, the Redemption of the race must be followed by the Sanctification of the individual.

To render this more clear, we may make use of a simple analogy.

* Hab. i. 13. † St. John xiv. 2.

I, being a rich man, find that one in whom I am deeply interested has been reduced to utter beggary. He has misused his chances; he has frittered away his money; he is heavily in debt; and now he is left penniless, without any other friend than myself. What am I to do for him, if I wish to set him on his feet again?

First of all, obviously, I must pay his debts. Nothing at all can be done for him until he has been set right with his creditors. And as he cannot possibly discharge his obligations for himself, I must act as his representative, and discharge them for him.

So I pay, on his behalf, every farthing that he owes. I annul his bankruptcy. I make him a free man once more.

But after all, if I do that for him, and nothing more than that, I benefit him but very little. He is still without a penny in the world. He is just as helpless and hopeless as he was before. He will remain to the end of his days in the gutter. If I want really to help him, and not merely to benefit his creditors, I must supply him with fresh capital. Then, if he uses that capital wisely, and if I can inspire him with the knowledge that he can at any time turn to me for encouragement, for counsel, and—if need be—for further help, he may not only regain his lost position, but may rise to a far higher level than that on which he stood before.

Now man is the hopeless bankrupt. Christ, with all the wealth of heaven at His command, takes compassion on him. And the first thing that he does for him is to discharge his debt. He takes upon Himself all human sin. He bears its burden. He pays its price. By His Cross and Passion, He annuls man's bankruptcy and sets him free.

That is Redemption.

But still man, although he is redeemed, is as helpless as ever. Left to himself, he can never rise. If he is to be set on his feet—and if, above all, he is to be enabled to rise to a higher position than that in which he stood before,—two things more are necessary. In the first place, he must be supplied with fresh capital. And, in the second place, he must learn that, in using it, there is One to Whom he can always turn for encouragement, for counsel, and for help.

So it is that, after Redemption has been won, we have the Mission of the Holy Ghost. "I will pray the Father," was the Saviour's parting promise, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth. . . . He abideth with you, and shall be in you."*

It is not that while the initial part of the task of man's salvation has been performed by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the remaining part is to be carried out by the Third. All

* St. John xiv. 16, 17.

Three Persons are associated in the Salvation of mankind. The Father "gives" the Son; the Father and the Son together "send" the Spirit. Yet the whole work is that of Jesus Christ, Who is not only our Redeemer, but our Saviour. He alone can sanctify us, just as He alone could redeem us. But He carries out the latter part of His task through the Holy Spirit, Who acts as His Agent. This truth is plainly stated by our Blessed Lord Himself in His Address to the apostles on the eve of His Passion. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter. . . . I will send Him unto you. . . . When He is come, He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."* And earlier in the same Address the Saviour had supplemented and explained His promise to send "the Comforter" by adding "I will not leave you orphans; *I* will come unto you."†

Christ left the world only that He might return to it; but He did not return to it as He left it. He left it in local visible Presence: He returned to it in universal, invisible Presence. While He was on earth, there was at no moment more than one spot in which He could be found. Now that He has returned into Heaven, there is no

* St. John xiv. 16; xvi. 7, 8, 14, 15. † St. John xiv. 18.

spot in which He cannot be found. Wherever the believer is, there Jesus Christ is; because the Holy Spirit brings Him.

That is one reason why God the Holy Ghost is spoken of as "the Spirit of Christ,"* and "the Spirit of God's Son."† He is not only linked with Christ by that strange, mysterious tie which binds the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity together in the Unity of the Godhead. He has, as His Mission to men, the task of bringing Christ to them, and so of imparting to them, as individuals, the "gifts" which Christ won for them when He "led captivity captive."‡ And the first of those gifts is the "fresh capital" which man must use, and use rightly, if after being set free from his spiritual bankruptcy he is to regain his lost position, and—eventually—to rise above it.

This "fresh capital" is nothing less than the gift of a new nature. The idea of the sacred writers is that the nature of man is wholly wrecked and ruined by sin; that the destruction of that nature is so complete that its recovery is impossible; that "death" follows as a necessary and inevitable consequence; and therefore that the only thing that can be done for him is to give him a new nature—human also, but perfectly pure, and incapable of sinning—to take its place. So they never make use of a phrase which is constantly upon human lips; they never

* Rom. viii. 9. † Gal. iv. 6. ‡ Ephes. iv. 8.

urge men and women to lead "better lives." They always tell them that they must live "a new life." "Like as Christ also was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father," so we are also to "walk in newness of life."* "Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."†

This is the whole idea of the Christian life—that the old nature of man, derived from the first Adam, is so hopelessly corrupted by sin that its restoration is impossible; but that it can be replaced by a new nature, just as truly human as the old, yet entirely and for ever free from the contaminating influence which destroyed its predecessor. That new nature is the Human Nature of Jesus Christ, the Second Adam. It is imparted by His Holy Spirit, "the Lord and the Life-Giver." It is given first of all, so to speak, in germ, just like the natural life of the body. And afterwards, if all goes well, it can so develope and grow, and so be continually reinforced by fresh gifts of spiritual power and energy, that the old nature will be expelled by it, till at last the element of sin has wholly disappeared, and the soul, even in the searching sight of God Himself, will be pure and perfect, because it is living only in the Humanity which is in Christ Jesus. In Scriptural language, it will have "put off the old man,"‡ and "put on the New Man."§ It will

* Rom. vi. 4. † Gal. vi. 15. ‡ Ephes. iv. 22.
§ Ephes. iv. 24.

have come into entire union with the "Second Adam," Who is "a quickening Spirit."*

This idea is brought out very forcibly by St. Paul. To the Romans he says, "If we have become united with Him by the likeness of His Death, we shall be also by His Resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died unto sin once for all: but the Life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus."† And he follows up this statement of fact with a practical exhortation, in which he reminds his readers that the development and the final supremacy of this new Nature will depend very largely upon themselves; in other words, that they must make a right and diligent use of the "fresh capital" which has been entrusted to them.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, again, the apostle developes this thought at even greater length. It is one of the leading ideas, indeed, of the whole of the first part of that wonderful

* 1 Cor. xv. 45. † Rom. vi. 5, etc.

letter. And after he has dwelt upon the scope of God's Love and Christ's Work, and upon the comprehensiveness of the Saviour's mystical "Body," he sums up his argument by showing that those who have received the new Nature in which they can rise, if they will, even to "a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,"* can only do so by realizing that they have nothing more to do with sin, and by framing their entire lives in accordance with that belief. "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk, as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind. . . . Ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught by Him, even as truth is in Jesus; that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the New Man, which is after God, created in righteousness and holiness of truth."† And then once more he turns to a practical exhortation, which occupies almost the whole of the remainder of the Epistle. Husbands, wives, masters, servants, parents, children, are all to recollect that the basis of their duties one towards another lies, not merely in their special relations, but in their common membership of the "Body of Christ." And he reminds the Colossians that they must "put away all

* Ephes. iv. 13. † Ephes. iv. 17, 20, etc.

these—anger, wrath, malice, railing, evil speaking out of their mouths," and that they must not lie one to another ;* the reason being that they have " put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the New Man, which is being renewed after the image of Him that created him," and that " Christ is all, and in all."†

And, after all, this is not St. Paul's own thought. It is only his expansion and application of the Thought of Jesus Christ, which He embodies in the Parable of the Vine, and also in that wonderful saying in which He sums up His whole relationship with God and with the human race—" I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."‡

Christ holds a twofold Office. He presents God to men. " I and the Father are One."§ " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."‖ He also presents men to God. " Ye in Me."¶ He is the Second Adam, the Epitome of all mankind, looking on Whom the Father can see man as His own Ideal, in absolute human perfection, in flawless human purity—mankind's Representative, Who has lived a human life on behalf of the entire race, in unswerving obedience to His Divine Will.

" Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him."

Before this presentation of men to God can

* Col. iii. 8, 9. † Col. iii. 9, 10, 11. ‡ St. John xiv. 20.
§ St. John x. 30. ‖ St. John xiv. 9. ¶ St. John xiv. 20.

be completed, however, and Christ can be enabled to bring us, as members of the race which He redeemed, into the courts of heaven, there must be the impartation of Himself to us. "I in you."*

So Jesus Christ does not only take our humanity and make us His, in order to redeem us. He also takes His Humanity, and makes it ours, in order to sanctify us. It is by imparting His Humanity to us that He enables us to "put off the old man" and "put on the New." It is the gift of the "fresh capital" which He bestows upon our bankrupt race, and which He gives us by His Spirit. And if we are willing to profit by the gift, and to make the best use of it that we may, it is given again and again in ever-increasing measure, the new Nature gradually ousting the old and taking its place, so that we may "gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of our own, even that which is of the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."† That righteousness is "imputed to us now,"‡ because we are "in Him." And it can be actually ours hereafter, if He is in us, "Ye in Me, *and* I in you." §

This new Nature is imparted to us, and is maintained in us, normally, through the medium

* St. John xiv. 20. † Phil. iii. 8, 9. ‡ Rom. iv. 11.
§ St. John xiv. 20.

of the Sacraments, which are the Divinely-ordained link between "the Redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the hope of glory." For this reason the Sacraments are "generally necessary to salvation." It is not, of course, that God is tied to them, and cannot do without them. He remains perfectly free to work through them, or independently of them, as He may see fit. We need not doubt that in many cases He works without them. But for those to whom His message of salvation comes, they are the appointed channels through which the Holy Spirit imparts those "gifts" which the Saviour won by His conquest over sin and death; the first of those gifts being the Nature of Christ Himself.

Not His Divine Nature. That cannot be imparted to us, because we, as created beings, are incapable of receiving it. As God, Jesus Christ stands for ever apart from men. His connection with them comes solely through His Manhood. It is important that this distinction should be borne in mind, because much of the opposition to her sacramental teaching with which the Church has had to contend has been due to a total misapprehension of its character. Men have imagined that the Church teaches, or at any rate that certain exponents of Church doctrine teach, that through the Sacraments the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ can be imparted to man. But the Church teaches nothing of the

kind. If she did so, there would be only one passage in the New Testament which she could bring forward in support of such claims—that in which St. Peter tells his readers that God has "granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises, that through these we may become partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust."* But even here the apostle is speaking only of the Human Nature of Christ as "the Second Adam," Who is "a quickening Spirit."† That Nature, in Him, has become "Divine" because it has been absolutely and inseparably united with the Divinity of One Who is God in all the fulness of Deity. But, as transmitted to ourselves, it is purely Human. Divinity is the exclusive attribute of God. It cannot be shared, in any degree, by any of the creatures of His Hand. Even union with Jesus Christ, which is possible to us, and which is most true and real, is union only on the side of His Humanity. That is implied in His Office as "the One Mediator between God and men."‡ On the one side of His twofold Nature He is united with God, Who is separate and apart from men; and on the other side He is united with men, who are separate and apart from God. Therefore He can transmit to us the one Nature, but not the other, while He Himself remains possessed of both. Through the medium of the Sacraments we

* 2 Peter i. 4. † 1 Cor. xv. 45. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

receive that Nature of Jesus Christ in which He lived, and suffered, and died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. This is the pure and spotless Humanity which has to replace that which has been ruined by sin—the "New Man" which must be put on as the "old Man" is put off. And, so far as we live in this New Nature, so far we ourselves are sinless. In the words of St. John, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."*

This gift is given, first of all, through Baptism. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ," says St. Paul to the Galatians—and the expression is a very remarkable one, Christ and His mystical "Body" being regarded as synonymous—"did put on Christ."† The tense of the verb shows that the apostle is referring, not to a gradual and visible growth in grace as the outcome of belief, but to a definite event which took place at a definite moment. The Galatian Christians had "put on Christ" as they were dipped in the Baptismal Water and the Baptismal Words were spoken. "Are ye ignorant," he asks the Christians at Rome, "that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His Death? We were buried with Him through Baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,

* 1 John iii. 9. † Gal. iii. 27.

so we also might walk in newness of life."* And it is this idea that underlies his favourite image of the Church as the "Body" of Christ. The members of a body owe their membership to the fact that they partake of the life which comes flowing down into them, through the body, from the head. And we are "the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof."† "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body . . . and were all made to drink of one Spirit."‡

More than this, we have the same idea in the teaching of our Saviour Himself. In His conversation with Nicodemus, He repeatedly speaks of the necessity of being "born anew;"§ and the manner in which He associates this "new birth" with "water and the Spirit"‖ shows that He is speaking of Baptism. He is forecasting the one Sacrament here just as in His address to the Jews at Capernaum He is forecasting the other, speaking of that which had not yet been formally ordained, and allowing His deep and mysterious words to sink down into the minds of His hearers till His fuller explanation, later on, should enable them to understand His meaning. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where

* Rom. vi. 3, 4. † 1 Cor. xii. 27. ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 13.
§ St. John iii. 3, 7. ‖ St. John iii. 5.

it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

Now the very essence of a birth is the giving of a life. Apart from that idea, the term has no meaning at all. And just as at our physical birth we receive our physical life, so at our spiritual birth we receive our spiritual life. In other words, we receive the gift of the New Humanity which is in Jesus Christ through Baptism, which brings incorporation into His mystical Body. The earthly is a symbol of the heavenly. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."†

And this explains our Lord's metaphor of "the Kingdom of God," or "the Kingdom of Heaven," which He so frequently uses to designate His Church. The only way of admission into an earthly kingdom is by natural birth; for "naturalization" is nothing more than a legal compact, in virtue of which certain legal rights are granted. The naturalized Frenchman or German remains an actual Frenchman or German still. And the only way of admission into the spiritual Kingdom is by spiritual birth. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he *cannot* enter into the Kingdom of God."‡ An unbaptized person may be a believer in Christ,

* St. John iii. 3, etc. † St. John iii. 6. ‡ St. John iii. 5.

a lover of Christ, a follower of Christ. But he is not a member of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, because he has not been born into it.

And this is also the explanation of St. Paul's metaphor of the Church as "the Body of Christ." For membership of a body, like membership of a Kingdom can only come through birth. We must be "born anew" through "the washing of regeneration"* or new birth, to become "members of Christ." There is no other way of becoming incorporated with His mystical "Body."

It may be noticed, in passing that this is one of the strongest of all arguments for the Baptism of infants. For birth into an earthly kingdom, as well as into a physical body, takes place in infancy, and brings duties in its train as a matter of course, without any knowledge or consent on the part of the infant.

Baptism, then, regarded from the sacramental point of view, imparts to the soul that perfect Humanity which Jesus Christ has bound up for ever with His own Divinity, and in which alone, through union with Him, it can hope to enter heaven. In the new Birth the new Life is given. This Life receives a fresh access of power in Confirmation, which the Church has always regarded as the completion of Baptism, bringing with it a special and abiding Gift of the Holy Spirit. And the soul has the choice before it of cultivating either the old nature or the New;

* Titus iii. 5.

of living according to the flesh or to the Spirit.

But it is not left to work out its own salvation unassisted and alone. Still there is help which can be given to it from the Perfect Humanity of Jesus Christ. All life—or, at any rate, all derived life—requires nourishment. It is so with the lower forms. Vegetable life, animal life, depend for their continuance and their vigour upon food. It is so with the higher forms. The promise to the souls of the redeemed, in their final exaltation, is that Christ will give them "to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the Paradise of God."* And it is so with the life of the soul upon earth. The New Humanity of Jesus Christ, imparted to it in the one Sacrament, must be nourished and invigorated by the other. Our souls can be "strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." It is very notable that the Saviour did not promise a mere gift of grace, but laid insistent stress on the fact that what He had to offer would come through the eating of His Flesh and the drinking of His Blood as the emblems and channels of His Humanity. "Jesus said unto them, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have not Life in yourselves. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in Him."†

* Rev. ii. 7. † St. John vi. 53, 56.

Into all the dreary controversies which have raged with regard to the nature of the Gift in the Eucharist it is not necessary for us, happily, to enter. Suffice it to say that no theory of Eucharistic grace seems satisfactory, or even tenable, which does not regard it as the bestowal of spiritual nutriment from the New Humanity of Jesus Christ. "Behind much that is sceptical on one side," says the late Archbishop Alexander, "and more that is sordidly materialistic on the other, lies the vast incontrovertible fact that Christ in the Eucharist offers Himself to men. But what is conveyed in that ambiguous word 'Himself'? Does it mean that, since He is Divine, He will bestow on us Divine influences to uplift and inspire us—that, as Ezekiel foretold, He will put His Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in His statutes? This is implied, but this is quite certainly inadequate to express the specific and differentiating grace offered to us in the Supper. For Christ did not use the vague word 'Himself,' still less did He speak of His Spirit, but of His Body and Blood, even as, in the discourses in St. John, He asserted that His Flesh was meat indeed, and His Blood drink indeed. Such expressions are incomprehensible—and so is St. Paul's declaration that the race began again in Christ as a Second Adam, and Giver of a spiritual body—unless we believe that His Body was unique, a new thing, mysterious, primitive, the well-head of a river of new life.

One knows well enough what will be said of an argument like this. It will be set down as 'mystical' and the tone in which that dreadful word is uttered will imply it to be refutation enough for anything. But it will be some consolation to find 'mystical' considerations ranging themselves on the side of a doctrine which is apt to be decried as 'carnal.'"

This is not, of course, the whole of the matter. The "means of grace" include Prayer, and the study of God's Word, and all the manifold influences of the Holy Spirit, in addition to the two great Sacraments of the Gospel. But the Mission of God the Holy Ghost above all provides, as its one great purpose and aim, that the new and unstained Humanity in which Jesus Christ our Lord has lived, and suffered, and died, and risen again, and ascended into heaven, may be imparted to the individual soul, in order that its Redemption may be followed by Sanctification, without which Salvation is impossible. The complement of "Ye in Me" is "I in you." We are redeemed by Christ's Death; but we must be sanctified by the power of His Risen Life. That power is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, Who gives to us the Humanity of the Second Adam to replace that of the first, and maintains and nourishes It within us through the appointed means of grace, the condition of its reception, on our own part, being faith. And in the far-off "End,"

that " great Divine Event toward which the whole creation moves," the process may be at last completed, the " old man " be wholly put off, the " New Man " be fully put on, and we may be so truly, perfectly, and altogether one with Christ Jesus, that even in the all-seeing Eyes of God Himself we may be " meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."*

" O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us ; save us, and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

* Col. i. 12.

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